



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## DRAMATIC ASPECTS OF MEDIEVAL FOLK FESTIVALS IN ENGLAND<sup>1</sup>

BY CHARLES READ BASKERVILL

### I

Every student of life in the middle ages will recognize immediately the impossibility of tracing with any fulness or detail the history of ancient forms of pageantry and drama among the folk of medieval England. Yet I have no doubt that all the festival occasions with which dramatic or semi-dramatic customs of the modern folk are associated were celebrated in England during the middle ages, and with an even greater confusion of pagan and Christian elements than in modern times. There is at least more evidence than has yet been massed proving a wide vogue of folk festivals and games in varied forms, not only before Chaucer's death but before the Norman Conquest. Here I am interested only in those early festivals which either in their general organization or in special features have contributed to the development of semi-dramatic folk games or of folk drama. The nature of the celebrations is discussed only in the most general way, no attempt being made, with the meager details of our records, to establish their exact character, since supporting evidence for such a study must be drawn in part from other countries than England and in part from modern folk customs, whereas I wish to confine myself here to contemporary evidence for England alone.

<sup>1</sup> Brand, *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain* (edited by Sir Henry Ellis, London, 1849); Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*; Haddan-Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*; Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*; and Thorpe, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England* are constantly cited in this study by the name of the author or editor only. Other abbreviations employed, usually conventional, are *N. and Q.*, with the series number preceding, for *Notes and Queries*, *N. E. D.* for *The New English Dictionary*, *R. S.* for *Rolls Series*, etc. In quoting Anglo-Saxon I have used *g* for *ȝ*, disregarded diacritical marks in Thorpe, and repunctuated.

Doubtless in different social groups and different communities the stages in the evolution from pagan rite toward game and drama varied greatly at any given time. Yet a certain advance toward sophistication and formal organization into social pastime is apparent in the records to be cited. At least three stages can be readily distinguished: first, that of pagan ritual, still preserved in certain folk customs; second, that in which festival customs, sophisticated as a result of advancing culture and the modification of pagan festivals by the church, developed among the folk as social pastimes; third, a stage in which the diversions of the festival celebration became professionalized through passing into the hands of village performers, minstrels, and players, and probably also through the admixture of elements from the repertoire of medieval entertainers. But prohibitions and satire of the medieval period constantly picture for us at the same time pure paganism on the one hand and social and professional pastimes on the other. In general, when records become explicit, the greatest advance toward social pastimes is seen to have taken place among the cultured, and the most frequent employment of professional entertainers at festivals to have been associated with the more important towns. I believe, however, that in Anglo-Saxon England the system of folk festivals was extensive and that the drift toward the social and professional set in very early. In that case, some at least of the season games, the mummers' plays, and the song dramas of the folk may have been in the early stages of development in England between the sixth and the tenth centuries. My feeling is that by the time of the Norman Conquest, the games in England had probably developed elaborate mimesis, usually accompanied by choral song, and that the greater part of the dialogue belonging to the complex forms of actual folk drama found among the modern mummers was the product of the centuries from 1200 to 1500.

Our accounts of life among the Anglo-Saxons, meager as they are, suggest the same adherence to pagan custom, the same devotion to pagan games, that in the centers of Europe called down the denunciation of a long line of church fathers. The pagan seasonal festivals were clearly popular. A pagan winter festival among the Anglo-Saxons is to be inferred from Bede's allusion to ceremonies enacted in the night watches in honor of *Modranicht*, December

24.<sup>2</sup> Other evidence in regard to European midwinter observances in the period indicates that Modranicht was probably a tribal feast of ancestors, with special rites of feeding the *matres*.<sup>3</sup> Egbert's Penitential of the eighth century forbids the celebration of January Kalends,<sup>4</sup> and canons in the reign of Edgar in the tenth century

<sup>2</sup> *De temporum ratione* cap. 15: "Incipiebant autem annum ab octavo Calendarum Januariarum die, ubi nunc natale Domini celebramus. Et ipsam noctem nunc nobis sacrosanctam, tunc gentili vocabulo Modranicht, id est, matrum noctem appellabant; ob causam ut suspicamur ceremoniarum, quas in ea pervigiles agebant." Conventional Christmas feasts are indicated at the end of the seventh century in Theodore's Penitential (see note 21). Cf. Thorpe, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, II, 46, for a passage in cap. XXXVIII of the spurious (see note 4) Penitential of Theodore which refers to "Vigilias vero in nocte Dominica." Canons of Edgar's reign (tenth century) after forbidding songs and games on feast days (see note 13) and markets or folk-moots on Sunday add: "And we læreð þæt man geswice higeleasra gewæda & dislicra geræda & bismorlicra efesunga" [Latin version has: "Docemus etiam, ut cessent falsa et stulta colloquia, et ignominiosae tonsurae"], which Thorpe translates: "And we enjoin, that unbecoming garments, and foolish discourses, and ignominious shavings be abstained from" (Thorpe, *Anc. Laws*, II, 248-49; Wilkins, *Concilia*, I, 226). This in all probability refers to the Christmas revelry and misrule recorded extensively from the early middle ages in connection with the Feast of Fools, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, I, 231 and 265-66; II, 306. Cf. notes 190 and 191 for the worship of these or a kindred group of goddesses in England in the twelfth century and after.

<sup>4</sup> Haddan-Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, III, 424. The passage is quoted in note 10 below. In the so-called Penitential of Theodore published by Thorpe from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 190, said by Haddan-Stubbs (III, 175) to be Frankish and to contain work of a period as late as the ninth century, there is a variant of this passage and in another section of the same division (cap. XXVII) the following reference to a Kalends custom: "Si quis in kalendas Januarii in cervulo aut vetula vadit, id est, in ferarum habitus se commutant [MS. communicant], et vestiuntur pellibus pecudum, et assumunt capita bestiarum," etc. (*Anc. Laws*, II, 34). Since this penitential used much material from the genuine penitentials of Theodore and Egbert (Haddan-Stubbs, III, 175, 414) and bore Theodore's name, it was probably formed in large part from English sources. Consequently, I have quoted in the notes parts of chapters XXVII and XXXVIII, which amplify other references to festival customs in England. The translation into Anglo-Saxon of many of the penitentials and constitutions cited later, though they have used Continental material, justifies the use here, for in all probability the compilations were usually made because the rules were applicable to life and customs in England.

inveigh against "þa gemearr, þe man drihð on geares niht."<sup>5</sup> According to one of Aelfric's homilies the New Year was in his time observed on March 21, and it is said that "foolish men practise manifold divinations on this day, against their christianity, as if they could prolong their life or their health."<sup>6</sup> Bede in deriving the name Easter from the Teutonic goddess Eostre refers to a spring festival among the Anglo-Saxons preceding the advent of Christianity.<sup>7</sup> Pagan feasts early began to coalesce with Christian festivals, however, and to feel the transforming power of the church.

Gregory's famous instructions to Augustine in 601 for dealing with heathen England first reveal the hold of pagan rites upon the folk, and the policy of the church in weaning the people gradually from their heathen practices. The fanes of the pagan gods, says Gregory, are to be purified, not destroyed, and the sacred places of the people are to be used for the new worship. Idols are to be replaced by altars and relics of the saints. Even the oxen once slain for a sacrifice to heathen deities are now to furnish a Christian feast, which the people may celebrate in arbors made of boughs of trees and built around the church whose especial festival is being celebrated.<sup>8</sup> So begin our accounts of the spring and summer

<sup>5</sup>This passage in a list of pagan practices is omitted in C. C. C. C. MS. 201, from which Wilkins and Thorpe printed these canons, but it is given in a note by Thorpe from Bodl. Junius 121 of the tenth century (*Anc. Laws*, II, 248).

<sup>6</sup>Thorpe, *Homilies of Aelfric*, I, 100, 101: "Nu wigliað stunte men menigfealde wigelunga on ðisum dæge, mid micclum gedwyldre, æfter hæðenum gewunan, ongean heora cristendom, swylce hi magon heora lif gelengan, oþþe heora gesundfulnysse." The homily contains an account of a number of other pagan practices.

<sup>7</sup>*De tempore ratione* cap. 15: "Eostur-monath, qui nunc Paschalis mensis interpretatur, quondam a Dea illorum quæ Eostre vocabatur, et cui in illo festa celebrabant, nomen habuit: a cuius nomine nunc Paschale tempus cognominant, consueto antiquæ observationis vocabulo gaudia novæ solennitatis vocantes." Theodore in the latter half of the seventh century mentions the Easter feasts of the clergy (see note 21).

<sup>8</sup>Bede, *Hist. Eccles.* I, 30. Cf. Plummer's edition, II, 59, for various references of Bede to idols in England which show the wide spread of fanes. The early German procession of the goddess Nerthus in her wagon through the land bringing festival joy, followed by the bathing of the goddess in a lake (Tacitus, *Germania* 40), and the feast of Tamfana (Tacitus, *Annales* I. 51), early forms apparently of the widely spread ceremonies for spring and

festivals of the folk, which survive to modern times in various local celebrations, with arbors, pageantry, mimetic dances, song, and games. Perhaps because the church was fighting with greatest vigor the darker superstitions and practices of paganism, we hear relatively little at first about the festival customs which she was attempting to absorb. But the admonition of the Council of Clovesho, 747, that Rogations be celebrated reverently and not, according to the common custom, with *ludi*, horse races, and feasts,<sup>9</sup> shows in the eighth century the same encroachment of paganism on Christian festivals that is revealed in numerous church decrees of a later period.

An interesting phase of the early struggle against paganism was the attempt to substitute the church edifice for certain types of heathen shrines. A large number of decrees deal with the practice of pagan rites at stones, wells, and trees. Auguries, divinations, magic spells, and enchantments are most frequently mentioned as features of the rites at such shrines. In Egbert's Penitential the use of augury or enchantment and the uttering of vows in arbors are forbidden.<sup>10</sup> The holding of wakes at wells is expressly

autumn respectively (cf. Golther, *Handbuch der germanischen Mythologie*, pp. 218 ff., 230, 456 ff., 585 f.), indicate not only an elaboration of festival procedure from the beginning of the records of Teutonic life, but a general resemblance to corresponding modern seasonal festivals of the folk. Tacitus' references to the sword dances of German youths (*Germania* 25) and to the song and music in the night revelry of a Teutonic army (*Annales* I, 51) suggest the vogue of the two most important elements of the folk *ludi*, song and dance. Such records indicate the type of festival custom that the Anglo-Saxons brought to England. Doubtless most of the records of north-west Europe for centuries after might justly be used to throw light on early English customs. When Saxo Grammaticus in the eleventh century in connection with the description of a feast at Upsala speaks of "*effeminatos corporum motus scenicosque mimorum plausus ac mollia nolarum crepitacula*" (cited by Golther, *op. cit.*, p. 569 along with other records of dance), the last possibly a reflection of dances like the morris, we have details that are probably applicable to English *ludi*, especially in view of the persistency of folk custom and in the light of the wide vogue of customs similar to those described here at all periods not only in kindred tribes but among all the nations of Europe.

<sup>9</sup> Haddan-Stubbs, III, 368: "Non admixtis vanitatibus, uti mos est plurimis, vel negligentibus, vel imperitis, id est, in ludis et equorum cursibus, et epulis majoribus."

<sup>10</sup> Haddan-Stubbs, III, 424: "Auguria vel sortes qui dicuntur false sanctorum vel divinationibus observare vel quarumcumque scripturarum inspec-

put under ban by the church.<sup>11</sup> Northumbrian Priest Laws prescribe penalties for gatherings at stones, trees, and wells;<sup>12</sup> and canons in the reign of Edgar, directed against practically the same customs, give additional warning against heathen songs and games of the devil on feast days.<sup>13</sup> Feasts of the dedication of the local church took the place of pagan festivities at local shrines,<sup>14</sup>

tione futura promittunt, vel votum voverit in arbore vel in qualibet re excepto æcclesiam, si clerici vel laici, excommunicentur," etc.

"Caraios et divinos precantatores, filecteria etiam diabolica vel erbas vel facino suis vel sibi inpendere vel V. feria in honore Jovis vel Kalendas Januarias secundum paganam causam honorare," etc.

<sup>11</sup> The penitential printed by Wilkins and Thorpe (with division into "Confessional" and "Penitential") as Egbert's, of which the first and last parts are apparently derived from English sources and the other three are adapted from the penitential of Halitgar of Cambrai (Haddan-Stubbs, III, 413-16), has in the English portion: "Gif hwa hlytas oððe hwatunga bega oððe his wæccan æt ænigum wylle hæbbe" (Thorpe, *Anc. Laws*, II, 210; Wilkins, I, 137). The dubious sections prescribe penance, "Gif hwylc man his ælmessean gehate oððe bringe to hwylcon wylle oððe to stane oððe to treowe oððe to ænigum oðrum gesceaftum" (Thorpe, II, 190; Wilkins, I, 131). Cf. also the Ecclesiastical Laws of Canute, Wilkins, I, 306, and notes 12 and 13 below. In the spurious penitential of Theodore, cap. XXVII has decrees against all forms of paganism, including worship of trees, stones, and wells (Thorpe, II, 32-34). Surveys of the paganism of the period are found in Kemble, *Saxons in England*, I, chap. XII (mythology) and App. F (quotations from the decrees, charms, etc.), and in Fischer, *Aberglaube unter den Angel-Sachsen*.

<sup>12</sup> Wilkins, I, 220 (Thorpe, II, 298): "Gif friþgeard sy on hwæs lande abuton stan oþþe treow oþþe welle oþþe swilces ænige fleard," etc.

<sup>13</sup> Wilkins, I, 226 (Thorpe, II, 248): "XVI. And we lærað þæt preosta gehwile cristendom geornlice arære, & ælcne hæpendom mid ealle adwæsce, & forbeode wilweorþunga & licwigunga & hwata & galdra & manweorþunga & ða gemearr ðe man ðrifþ on mislicum gewigungum & on fyrþe & on hlottum & on ellenum & eac on oþrum mislicum treowum & on stanum & on manegum mistlicum gedwimerum ðe man on dreogaþ fela ðær ðe hi nane scoldan.

"XVIII. And we læraþ þæt man geswice freols dagum hæþenra leoþa & deofles gamena."

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Chambers, I, 114, n. 2, for the early celebrations in honor of the dedication of the churches and for the wakes in connection with them. Cf. Theodore's *Capitula* in Thorpe, II, 84, for a reference to wakes in pagan ritual: "Qui nocturna sacrificia dæmonum celebraverint, vel incantationibus dæmones invocaverint, capite puniantur."

but wild merrymaking at these church wakes was the price paid for the partial elimination of paganism. According to the picture which Aelfric draws for us, mad drinking, foolish pastimes, and wanton speech marked the church wakes.<sup>15</sup>

The great events in the life of the individual—birth, marriage, death—were also occasions for pagan ritualism and festival merriment. Witchcraft and charms in connection with birth are denounced in the Penitential of Egbert.<sup>16</sup> In 970 the canons of Aelfric forbid superstitious regard for the body of the dead, pagan songs and loud outcries, and eating or drinking where the body lies, lest the paganism that prevails in the wakes prove infectious.<sup>17</sup> The word *bride-ale*, which became fixed in the language in the Anglo-Saxon period,<sup>18</sup> is the best evidence that marriage was the occasion for feasting and the merrymaking that inevitably goes with the feast. Love rites, which according to modern folk custom might be expected on many of the festival occasions that have been surveyed, are indicated in the period chiefly by decrees against inducing love with charms and sorceries, especially through the

\* See Aelfric's letter to Bishop Wulfstanus (Fehr, *Die Hirtenbriefe Aelfrics in Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa*, ix, 25, § 107): "Nu doð men swa-þeah dyslice for oft, þæt hi willað wacian and wodlice drincan binnan Godes huse and bysmorlice plegian and gegaf-spræcum Godes hus gifylan." Canons of Edgar's reign, about the middle of the tenth century, forbid revelry at church wakes: "And we lærað þæt man æt ciric-wæccan æwiðe gedreoh si & georne gebidde, & ænig gedrinc & ænig unnit þar ne dreoge" (Thorpe, ii, 250; Wilkins, i, 227). The spurious penitential of Theodore has: "Vigilias vero in nocte Dominica, aut in natale Sanctorum, in nullo alio loco, nisi in æcclesia, observare debent" (Thorpe, ii, 46).

<sup>16</sup> Wilkins, i, 138 (Thorpe, ii, 210): "Gif heo [wifman] tilaþ hire cilde mid ænigum wiccecræfte oþþe æt wega gelæton & ðurh ða eorþan tihþ, eala þæt ys mycel hæþenscype." This passage is found in the part of the penitential supposedly drawn from English sources.

<sup>17</sup> Thorpe, ii, 356-58 (Wilkins, i, 255): "Ge ne scylan fægnigan forð-farenra manna, ne þæt lic gesecan buton eow mann laðige þær-to; þænne ge þær-to gelaðode syn, þonne forbeode ge þa hæðenan sangas þæra læwedra manna & heora hludan cheahchetunga; ne ge sylfe ne eton ne ne drincon þær þæt lic inne lið, þe læs þe ge syndon efen-læce þæs hæðenscipes þe hy þær begað." The reference to songs in like-wakes is repeated in Aelfric's letter to Wulfstanus (ed. Fehr, p. 25; see note 15). In Theodore's Penitential, 668-690, the burning of grain in the presence of the dead for the protection of the living and of the house is forbidden (Haddan-Stubbs, iii, 190).

<sup>18</sup> *N. E. D.*, s. v.



preparation of food or drink.<sup>19</sup> *Judicium Clementis*, supposedly Anglo-Saxon and assigned to the late seventh century,<sup>20</sup> contains a decree against desecrating the churches by dancing or singing love songs on festival occasions. In the customs here rebuked we may have a survival of an ancient love festival of the spring, in which the church has replaced the pagan shrine.

The compromises of the church with paganism were not confined to the folk but extended to the clergy. At the end of the seventh century Theodore, though he attacked the folk *ludi* where pagan ritual survived, excused from penance the *presbyter* or *diaconus* who had imbibed too much as a result of the joy of Christmas, Easter, or any of the feasts of the saints, especially if he had not taken more than was decreed by his superior.<sup>21</sup> Theodore's contemporary Aldhelm, as will be shown later, was a lover of popular song and minstrelsy. At the end of the Anglo-Saxon period we

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Theodore's Penitential, Haddan-Stubbs, III, 182, 188; Egbert's Penitential, Wilkins, I, 121, 137, and Thorpe, II, 155, 209; and the spurious penitential of Theodore, Thorpe, II, 33.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. Haddan-Stubbs, III, 226-27, and Chambers, I, 162, note continued from p. 161. The decree reads: "Si quis in quacunq[ue] festivit[ate] ad ecclesiam veniens pallat foris, aut saltat, aut cantat orationes amatorias . . . excommunicetur."

<sup>21</sup>Haddan-Stubbs, III, 177: If one "pro gaudio in Natale Domini aut in Pascha aut pro alicujus Sanctorum commemoratione faciebat, et tunc plus non accipit quam decretum est a senioribus, nihil nocet. Si Episcopus juberit, non nocet illi, nisi ipse similiter faciat." This may be a reflection of obligatory drinking at feasts. Bede in his account of Caedmon (*Hist. Eccles.* IV, 24) reveals the fact that each person was required to sing in turn at Anglo-Saxon feasts. For the survival of obligatory drinking see notes 219, 220. Cf. 4 *N. and Q.*, x, 312, for a modern "sermon joyeux" recited by a man who could not sing his song in Sussex feasts. Theodore's approval of talismans (Haddan-Stubbs, III, 198: "Demonium sustinenti licet petras et holera habere sine incantatione") is in keeping with the general superstitions of the period as revealed in the charms of the Anglo-Saxons. His attacks on paganism were directed at the "Cultura Idolorum" (pp. 189-90).

The spurious penitential of Theodore repeats the passage on drinking at the feasts but adds the following attack on *ludi* which seems to embody the attitude of a later period: "Jocationes, et saltationes, et \*circum, vel cantica turpia et luxuriosa, vel \*lusa diabolica, nec ad ipsas ecclesias, nec in domibus, nec in plateis, nec ullo loco alio facere præsument; quia hoc de paganorum consuetudine remansit" (Thorpe, II, 31, cap. XXVI; 46, cap. XXXVIII; a marginal note states that the starred words are as in the MS.).

find the church attempting to check abuses that may well have been fostered by the early liberality of churchmen. A number of orders are extant against priests' engaging in feasts at taverns or taking part in festival songs, especially at ales.<sup>22</sup> Dunstan in the eleventh century was accused of sorcery and of a love for "the vain songs of ancient heathendom, the trifling legends, the funeral chants."<sup>23</sup>

Professional entertainers, too, prevailed during the Anglo-Saxon period. Chambers has brought together a number of church decrees showing their invasion of the religious houses.<sup>24</sup> For example, as early as 679 a council at Rome enjoins the English clergy against permitting themselves to be entertained by musicians, *joci*, and *ludi*. The Council of Clovesho, 747, forbids the monasteries to receive poets, musicians, and *scurri*. Alcuin in 797 writes the Bishop of Lindisfarne that the clerics would do well to interest themselves in religious works rather than in *histriones*, pagan songs (*carmina gentium*), and the rabble of those who make merry in public places. In 969 King Edgar deplores the fact that the houses of the clergy have become the abode of *histriones*, and a place where *mimi* sing and dance<sup>25</sup>—an early suggestion of the song and dance drama so popular later.

In general we should expect the extant literature and records of the Anglo-Saxons to disregard very largely such phases of life as are represented by festival and pastime among the folk. The life

<sup>22</sup> Canons of Edgar's reign, about 960, Thorpe, II, 256 (Wilkins, I, 228): "*þæt ænig preost ne heo ealu-scop ne on ænige wisa gliwige mid him-selfum, oþ[þe mid] oðrum mannum*"; Northumbrian Priest Laws, Thorpe, II, 298 (Wilkins, I, 220): "*Gif preost oferdruncen lufige oþþe gliman oþþe eala-scop wurðe, gebete þæt*"; order of 994 against priests' haunting taverns, Wilkins, I, 225; decree of Council of London, 1102, Wilkins, I, 382: "*Ut presbyteri non eant ad potationes nec ad pinnas bibant.*"

<sup>23</sup> Gummere, *Germanic Origins*, p. 470. Cf. *Jour. Brit. Arch. Assn.*, XXXII, 325, for a relatively late popular song—date and source are not given—which represents Dunstan's famous conflicts with devils as reflections of drunkenness and lechery.

<sup>24</sup> *Mediaeval Stage*, I, 31-32.

<sup>25</sup> "*Oratio Edgari Regis pro Monachatu Propagando*" (Wilkins, I, 246): "*ut jam domus clericorum putentur prostibula meretricum, conciliabulum histrionum. Ibi aleae, ibi saltus et cantus, ibi usque ad medium noctis spatium protractae in clamore et horrore vigiliae . . . mimi cantant et saltant.*"

reflected is either that of the aristocratic warrior class, who were in the main scornful of frivolous pastime, or of the religious classes, who were busy combating all relics of paganism. The charms remain our fullest record of the paganism of England, and they have survived through the triumphant superstition of even the churchmen. They represent only the magic of pagan religion to the virtual exclusion of those phases of group worship, such as procession, dance, and feast, out of which most folk drama grew. Yet the charms apparently illustrate the vogue of song in pagan rites and in a few cases—notably in that of the charm for plowed land—the elaboration of mimesis. We need not assume, then, that the development of pagan ritual into festival and social pastime among the folk is adequately pictured in our scant records.

The inadequacy of our knowledge is now and then brought home to us by a chance glimpse of social life in this first great epoch of a distinctly English civilization. The life of St. Aldhelm illustrates the point as early as the seventh century. Aldhelm, a member of the royal family of the West Saxons, was expert in all kinds of music. He composed poems and songs in the English speech and sang or recited them. William of Malmesbury tells us that a "trivial" song which was sung by the populace in his own day had been recorded by Alfred as one of the compositions of Aldhelm—our first record of a popular song in England, though unfortunately the song itself is not known. (It is significant that Alfred, who is said by William of Malmesbury to have testified—in a book now lost—to the gifts of Aldhelm, was himself so expert as a minstrel that he could penetrate the camps of the Danes in the minstrel rôle.) Aldhelm made use of his gifts in his ministry. When the common people neglected the church service, Aldhelm placed himself, "*quasi artem cantitandi professum*," on a bridge by which they passed, and as they gathered to hear his singing, he introduced words of scripture in his frivolous songs (*inter ludicra*). The folk, probably without rebuke, honored him with their own song and dance. On his triumphal return from Rome early in the eighth century, not only did a procession of the clergy meet him with song and incense, but part of the laity danced to their *choreae* while others expressed their joy by the varied motions of their bodies.<sup>26</sup> A second illustration is furnished by a picture of a female

<sup>26</sup> Cf. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (R. S.), p.

dancer found in an Anglo-Saxon school book of the tenth century.<sup>27</sup> In elaboration of costume, especially the filmy dress, and in the harmonious control of the dancer's hands, body, and feet, our more elaborate ballets of modern times could hardly surpass the art that is suggested by the drawing. Perhaps the tastes and amusements of the Anglo-Saxons, even among the upper classes, were not essentially different from those of the English a few centuries later.

Before passing from the Anglo-Saxon period I should like to refer to a fact that seems to me significant for the development of folk festival. From the reign of King Alfred till the eve of the Reformation the holiday privileges of the English people were from time to time expressly recognized. The legislation of the church in regard to Sundays and festivals from an early period of church history in England favored the development of holiday privileges. Orders against work were constantly issued. They also forbade markets and folk moots, but it is clear from later history that they were futile in this respect. Equally frequent were others against arrests, trials, and ordeals on Sunday or festival days; and thefts, murders, and other crimes committed on holidays were punished with double severity.<sup>28</sup> By the ninth century at least even the common man followed his holiday pursuits with immunity.

336. On the basis of a book by Alfred, William of Malmesbury says, "Poesim Anglicam posse facere, cantum componere, eadem apposite vel canere vel dicere. Denique commemorat Elfredus, carmen triviale, quod adhuc vulgo cantitatur, Aldelmum fecisse." In this connection occurs the account of his gathering the folk by minstrelsy, to teach them. On pp. 373-74 is the account of his return from Rome: "Venienti occursum est ubique magna pompa, longo apparatu salutantium. Religiosorum alii suavi cantu mulcent aera, alii lignum Domini præferunt, alii odoris thimiamatibus vias affitiunt. Laicorum pars pedibus plaudunt choreas; pars diversis corporis gestibus internas pandunt lætities." Cf. 7 *N. and Q.*, ix, 381-82 for a comparison of this procession with the Echternach processional Whitsun dance. See also note 94.

<sup>27</sup> Given in Leach, *Schools of Medieval England*, p. 62.

<sup>28</sup> Church decrees and national laws that cover some or all of these details are very frequent in the Anglo-Saxon period, the laws of some of the later kings being very comprehensive. Cf. Haddan-Stubbs, iii, 186 (Theodore's Penitential) and 367 (Council of Clovesho); Thorpe, i, 64 (Laws of Alfred), 170, 172 (Edward and Guthrum), 320, 326, 344 (Ethelred), 402, 404, ii, 525-26, 536-37 (Cnut), ii, 248 (Canons of Edgar's reign), 298 (Northumbrian Priest Laws); Bateson, *Borough Customs*, Selden Soc., ii, 46 (list for Chester from Domesday Book, 1086, of festivals on which the

In the Ecclesiastical Laws of Alfred, 876, are enumerated the days of remission for free men, slaves being excepted. They are the twelve days of Christmas, the day that Christ overcame the devil, St. Gregory's day, seven days before Easter and seven after, one day for the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, a full week before the feast of Mary in the autumn, one day before the celebration of All Saints, and the four Wednesdays in the four ember weeks.<sup>29</sup> Ethelred prescribes fast and feast as the order of the festivals, and proclaims general peace and concord, with no ordeals or oaths and no collection of debts.<sup>30</sup> Edward the Confessor proclaims peace, and freedom to go and come, at the feasts that Alfred mentions and many others—Ascension and Pentecost, various saints' days, feasts of dedication of churches, etc.<sup>31</sup> Early in the reign of Edward I (1274-6) the men of King's Ripton, Huntingdonshire, brought suit against the Abbot of Ramsey in an attempt to free themselves from some of their manorial duties. Among these was the obligation to plow for the lord every Friday, "unless a feast day interfere and in that case taking the whole year one feast shall be reckoned to the lord and the next to the said men, saving fifteen days at the feast of Christmas and eight days at Easter and eight at Pentecost," an arrangement that dated from the reign of Henry II, the great grandfather of Edward I.<sup>32</sup> Rather late for the period to be discussed, but very significant in its indication of the continuity of English festival customs and of the privilege allowed the individual, is a decree of the Corporation of Great Grimsby in 1481, according to which "no man nor woman shall be arest for dett w<sup>in</sup> any sewtwarre or Burges howse of the forsed town, nor for dett, nor for trespass, on thies daies undir written, viz., from Zelle Even that none be runge unto the

shedding of blood was especially reprehensible; cf. also pp. 47-49 and I, 173); etc.

<sup>29</sup> Wilkins, I, 194; Thorpe, I, 92, and II, 457.

<sup>30</sup> Thorpe, I, 308.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 443.

<sup>32</sup> Maitland, *Select Pleas in Manorial Courts*, Selden Society, 1888, I, 102-3. Cf. Wilkins, *Concilia*, I, 677-78, Constitutions of Bishop Chanteloup, for the list of festival days to be observed in Worcester in 1240 (certain of these days to be observed by all except plowmen); and II, 711, for a fourteenth century list of Ralph, Bishop of Bath and Wells. Such lists are met not infrequently.

day after Plugh day, Candlemas day, fastynggangeven, from prime forward, from Schere Thoresdy at morne unto the day senyt, all Crose weyke, the iij holydais in Penticost, Corpus Xpi day, Saynt Austyn day, nor none shall pay tolle that day, or Mydsomer Even, nor on Saynt Petir even, from none be runge of Mary Magdelyn, from none be runge nor of hir day; but yff any do trespas or take any thyng and agrese not w<sup>t</sup> the parte thai shalbe arrest."<sup>33</sup> A Lincoln order for Christmas of the same year proclaims the freedom of all to pursue "honeste mirth and gam sportis."<sup>34</sup> Whatever control the church may have attempted to exercise over its flock during the festival season, however much of the time may have been given over to fairs and markets, it is clear that from an early date the folk had elaborate festival periods and that tradition in this matter did not change greatly for many centuries except in the decay or the splitting up of the autumn festival period, which during the middle ages was largely absorbed by Christmas on the one hand or by the midsummer festivals on the other.

The completion of a certain transformation in English life, the beginning of the modern world in the broader sense, is represented in the era following the Norman Conquest, with the enormous increase in wealth and trade, with the development of court, guild, puy, and other organizations of social life, with the outburst of great vernacular literatures—French, Anglo-French, and English—and with the full tide of new dramatic impulses as seen in mystery, miracle, and procession. Yet the drama which descended to later times among the common people is not to be regarded as fundamentally a product of the new civilization introduced by courtly lords and their retainers. The body of Anglo-Saxon ritual brought over from the Continent—probably modified by the non-Aryan, the Celtic, and the Roman civilizations which preceded the Teutons

<sup>33</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, xiv, App. viii, 267-68. Cf. p. 271 for a similar order in 1495 in regard to "the market day."

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23, and Bateson, *Borough Customs*, II, 48. The order states that from St. Thomas' Day to Twelfth Day after "the mayr of this cite be his officers hathe proclamyd the prewalege gyrthe, and the solempnite of the fest of the byrth of oure Lord . . . evere franchest man and denyssen inhabite within this cite schall have free liberte and sayffegarde in honest mirth and gam sportis to goo or doe what hym pleyes" without fear of arrest.

on the island, and later by incursions of Danes—had apparently before the Conquest already passed finally from the realm of worship to the realm of play under the pressure of ecclesiastical attacks. Nor is it to be doubted that as the wealth and culture of England increased, the pastimes of the people multiplied even before the Norman invasion.

## II

It is with the stabilizing of English life under the Norman kings, however, that records become sufficient in number and specific enough to offer some basis for a history of medieval popular drama in England. In particular, records of folk life begin to appear in the swelling volume of native Latin literature, especially in the works of Gervase of Tilbury and Giraldus Cambrensis. Thus many a folk custom significant for drama, though probably fixed for centuries, can be spoken of simply as existing in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

On the whole the assumption seems warranted that the process by which pagan ritual became folk pastime or drama had reached its final stage by 1200. In the period from 1200 to the middle of the sixteenth century folk drama flourished in England, developing those features which later contributed to popular farce and the Elizabethan stage jig, and taking on much the forms in which it has survived to modern times in singing games and mummers' plays. Without any attempt to make a detailed survey of the period I should like first to emphasize, primarily from the point of view of the dramatic, the folk element in the more important seasonal festivals<sup>35</sup> that were appropriated by church and state.

In the Christmas revelry which during the middle ages had such an extensive vogue throughout Europe, folk custom undoubtedly played a large part, though the sports were consciously reworked and were elaborated with great splendor among the upper classes. The elements are not easily disentangled. Boy bishops, lords of misrule, lords of Christmas, abbots of unreason, and kings of Twelfth Night are accepted as survivals from midwinter Satur-

<sup>35</sup> "Brand Material" in *Folk-Lore*, volumes XXVI, XXVII, and XXVIII, gives in outline form the best general view of the survivals of folk customs and games in Great Britain and of the extent to which the festivals considered in this article are celebrated.

nalía remodeled in monasteries, schools, and courts. There seems no reason to doubt that the Roman Saturnalia and Kalends feast coalesced with northern tribal feasts which occurred from the beginning of November to midwinter, and that with the Christian era these winter celebrations shifted in part to the festivals of the Christmas period.<sup>36</sup> From the point of view of drama probably the most important contribution to the winter celebrations was the pagan ritual looking toward the coming of a new season of plenty. Early pagan conceptions of the year as beginning with winter, and later conceptions of the turn of the year near the winter solstice<sup>37</sup> caused the development of rituals for renewing the season of plenty and for securing the prosperity of the tribe. Such is the origin of the widespread customs of expelling the old year<sup>38</sup> or putting it to death symbolically, of enacting a contest between representatives of the old and the new, and of bringing in the new year with divinations, with placation of ancestors and daemones through sacrifices, wassails, gifts, and feasts, and with processions of skin-clad mummers led by *cervulus* or hobby-horse or other symbolic figures.<sup>39</sup>

The expulsion, or "forthdrove," and wassail as features of the medieval English Christmas are recorded for Bury St. Edmunds in 1369-70 and 1401-2.<sup>40</sup> The debate between the representatives of the two seasons in *Conflictus veris et hiemis* of the early ninth century,<sup>41</sup> sometimes ascribed to Alcuin, and many dialogues and farces on the subject in the middle ages doubtless reflect debates and contests such as have survived in folk custom in many parts of Europe.<sup>42</sup> A more definite form of the death of the old year or

<sup>36</sup> Chambers, I, 232, 247; Miles, *Christmas in Ritual and Tradition*, 165 ff.

<sup>37</sup> Chambers, I, 228, 234 ff.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Chambers, II, 304 f. for a reference in an eighth century homily, probably Frankish, to the pagan "qui in mense Februaris hibernum credit expellere."

<sup>39</sup> Chambers, I, chaps. VI, XI, XII.

<sup>40</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, XIV, App. VIII, p. 124:

"1369-70. Item, forthdrove et Wasseil ijs."

"1401-2. In furthedrove et Wosshayle ad Nat. [Domini], ijs."

"Cf. Allen, *Mod. Phil.*, VII, 30 for its style as "apparently reminiscent of its popular source."

<sup>42</sup> See Jacobsen, *La Comédie en France au Moyen-Age*, pp. 37 ff.; Frazer, *The Dying God*, pp. 254 ff.; Chambers, I, 80, n. 1, 187; etc.



conquest by an opponent is found in the Christmas plays of the modern mummers. The simulated beheading occurs in sword dances and in the *Revesby Sword Play*.<sup>43</sup> The contest is a feature of the very common St. George plays. In *Gawayne and the Grene Knight*, line 683, where the beheading of the Green Knight is compared to a Christmas game, we have testimony to the fact that some form of such a folk representation was known in the middle of the fourteenth century as a Christmas game. In London at least there must have been an extensive development of Christmas mumming during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.<sup>44</sup> An order of 1334 against night walkers forbids mummers to visit the homes of Londoners disguised either with false faces or otherwise.<sup>45</sup> The order against disguise at Christmas is repeated in 1393, 1405, and 1418.<sup>46</sup> In the last case various classes of persons and types of performances are specified to make the regulation more sweeping. It is ordered that "no manere persone, of what astate, degre, or condicioun þat euere he be, duryng þis holy tyme of Cristemes be so hardy in eny wyse to walk by nyght in eny manere mommyng, pleyes, enterludes, or eny oþer disgisynges with eny feynyd berdis, peyntid visers, diffourmyd or colourid visages in eny wise." This decree designates every type of popular pageantry and play, and in the matter of disguise includes even the painted face of the modern mummer. Not long afterwards, 1451-2, the specific name "Christmasse play" is given to the performance of village players at Tintinhull, Somerset.<sup>47</sup>

Details of the Christmas feast are seldom available till late in the middle ages or in the Renaissance, but it need not be supposed that the elaborate feasts of fools and performances of boy bishops—which are not considered here—supplanted the revelry of the folk.

<sup>43</sup> Manly, *Specimens of the Pre-Shaksperean Drama*, I, 296 ff. Cf. Machyn's *Diary*, Camden Soc., p. 33 for a sixteenth century example.

<sup>44</sup> Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (1876), pp. 238 and 239, reproduces fourteenth century drawings in England representing mummers in processions disguised with animal heads, clearly for social pastime. See also the skin-clad figures on p. 345 from the same manuscript.

<sup>45</sup> Riley, *Memorials of London*, p. 193.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 534, 561, 669. See Chambers, I, 393-94.

<sup>47</sup> Hobhouse, *Church-Wardens' Accounts*, Somerset Record Soc., p. 184: an entry of the receipt of 6s. 8d. from five men "de incremento unius ludi vocati Christmasse play."

The right of *gestum*, for example, that is, the right of the folk in the service of the lord to demand a feast at the lord's expense,<sup>48</sup> must have furnished many an occasion for merrymaking at Christmas. Thus in 1304 Lord de Grey made a payment toward the expense of a feast for his carters and other servants during the festival of St. Nicholas.<sup>49</sup> At King's Lynn twenty pence was paid in 1370-1 to minstrels and dancers at Christmas.<sup>50</sup> These may have been professionals, but the villagers here seem to have been active in holiday celebrations, as will appear later. During the fourteenth century various payments for Christmas festivities were made to *histriones* at Durham.<sup>51</sup> The players are so commonly entered as the king's or some noble's that in cases where a patron's name is lacking village performers may be intended, especially if the amount be small—for example, 12*d.* to *histriones* "ad Natale" in 1334-5 as against the frequent payment of 6*s.* 8*d.*—for in ensuing centuries village players received very small sums in the houses of the great. Such payments, I surmise, were for folk performances in addition to performances of boy bishops and the like. In 1415 twenty pence was the fee of men from Ropley who came to Winchester College on Innocents' Day, dancing and singing before the boy bishop.<sup>52</sup>

Twelfth Night, though ordinarily treated as a part of Christmas, is perhaps in origin akin to the spring fertilization festival on Plough Monday. Possibly as a result partly of the confusion of the calendar due to the mingling of cults from peoples of various nationalities and occupations who celebrated the turning of the seasons

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *Law Magazine and Law Review*, XIV, 351-52 for some records with interesting details of the feasts.

<sup>49</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com., Middleton MSS.*, p. 325: "Die Dominica in festo Sancti Nicholai . . . in gentaculo carectar[iorum] Domini et aliorum serviencium, iij*d.* ob." There were also various gifts, and payments for divers minstrels "in festo Sancti Nicholai."

<sup>50</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, XI, App. III, p. 220 (44-45 Edw. III): "menestrallis et tripudiatoribus in Festo Natal' Dni."

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Chambers, II, 240-44, especially the entries for the Christmas season in the years 1315, 1330-1, 1334-5, 1350-1, 1355-6, 1360-1, 1362. The Bursars' Rolls of the Durham Priory are printed only in part in the *Durham Account Rolls*, from which Chambers' entries are taken.

<sup>52</sup> Chambers, II, 246. In *Archæological Journal*, VIII, 83, another entry from the Winchester records is quoted. It is from the same period, the reign of Henry V, and of similar purport—a record of the singing and dancing of the Ropley players before the boy bishop.

at different times, customs appropriate to festivals ushering in the new year and promoting fertility are found from Christmas to Midsummer — on Twelfth Night, Plough Monday, Valentine Day, Easter, and Whitsun.<sup>53</sup> On these occasions love games and the marriage of season kings and queens furnish a distinctive element of the *ludi*. Though Twelfth Night, standing at the end of the Christmas season, has acquired some of the customs of Christmas, its most characteristic customs in modern times associate it with the celebration of fertility feasts. A perplexing feature is the king of the bean. He was known among the Roman folk and seems to have been a common figure in European festivals from the early middle ages. Many allusions suggest that he was a type of festival lord, who presided in monasteries and schools at a midwinter drinking feast of men. As such he was akin to lords of misrule. Among the modern folk, however, the king of the bean is associated in Twelfth Night festivities with a queen, who like him may be elected by lot, or who may be chosen by him.<sup>54</sup> I have found no reference to a king and queen of the bean in medieval England, though the decree of 1240 in which Walter de Chanteloup, Bishop of Worcester, forbade the clergy to support *ludi* "de Rege et Regina" might have included the Twelfth Night king and queen along with the now better known king and queen of the spring and summer festivals.<sup>55</sup> In the Customal of Northcory in the diocese of Wells, however, one William Brygge, a villein, is described in 1314 as having the right of "*gestum* and medale . . . but he must bring with him to the *gestum* his own cloth cup and trencher, and take away all that is

<sup>53</sup> For the confusion of the calendar, cf. Chambers, I, 112-14.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, I, 22-28; Frazer, *Scapegoat*, pp. 313-31; and Chambers, I, 260 and note. These authorities give a number of references to the custom for the early Renaissance and later. Cf. *Archaeologia*, xxvi, 342, for gifts of Edward II to the *Rex Fabae* in 1316 and 1317. The repetition of the gift suggests an annual election of the king of the bean at Edward's court. According to Brand "Beans for Twelfth Day" are mentioned in a French poem of the thirteenth century. Cf. Jamieson, *Etymol. Dict. of the Scott. Lang.* (1879-87) under "bane" for the king of the bean at the Scottish court in the sixteenth century, and Hannay, *Statutes at the Period of the Reformation*, St. Andrews Univ. Bull., vii, p. 18 for a Twelfth Night procession at the University of St. Andrews in the sixteenth century in which the privilege of disguising is denied to all save the king of the bean.

<sup>55</sup> Wilkins, I, 673; Chambers, I, 91. Cf. also Chambers, I, 169-74, 260-62.

left on his cloth, and he shall have for himself and his neighbours one wastel cut in three for the ancient Christmas game to be played with the said wastel.”<sup>56</sup> There is little reason to doubt that this is an allusion to the wastel, or cake, with a concealed bean or other magic symbol by which a king was chosen by lot for Twelfth Night; and the records of all Europe since the sixteenth century would lead us to believe that the game which the villein Brygge and his neighbors played called for both a king and a queen. There is no evidence available to show that the Twelfth Night king and queen met with frequently after the opening of the sixteenth century engaged in a symbolic marriage. Pageantry and games associated with Twelfth Night are full of love motives,<sup>57</sup> however, and the mummery plays of modern England for Plough Monday—the purely folk festival corresponding to Twelfth Night—are wooing and marriage plays.<sup>58</sup>

Plough Monday, indeed, as an ancient feast is closely connected with the fertilization rites of early spring. The antiquity of the ritual which it represents is seen in the fact that an Anglo-Saxon charm describes the elaborate ceremony of blessing the land. This consists in part in charming the sod and the plow, praying to Erce, “Mother of Earth,” for the fertility of the soil, plowing the first furrow, and laying in it a sacrificial cake.<sup>59</sup> Plough Monday was taken under the wing of the church in connection with the Epiphany season. The importance of the observance in England is indicated by frequent references to the plow light in account books of the early church and by the “gatherings” of money among the

<sup>56</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com., MSS. Dean and Chapter of Wells*, I, 335. Above the name of Brygge is written that of Roger Bat. Possibly Bat was either a representative of another village or the successor of Brygge. In either case there is the suggestion of the vogue of the Christmas game among the folk.

<sup>57</sup> *Mod. Phil.*, xiv, 468-76; Brand, I, 21 ff.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. for texts of these plays Mrs. Chaworth Musters, *Cavalier Stronghold*, pp. 388 ff.; *Revue des Traditions populaires*, iv, 605-12; Gutch and Peacock, *County Folk-Lore*, vol. v (*Folk-Lore concerning Lincolnshire*), pp. 176-87.

<sup>59</sup> “A charm for bewitched land” in Cockayne, *Leechdoms of Early England* (R. S.), I, 398-405. Cf. Gregor, *Notes on the Folk-Lore of the North-East of Scotland*, p. 181, for the ceremony in modern Scotland; Coulton, *Medieval Garner*, pp. 143-44, for a similar English invocation to earth from the early middle ages; and Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, pp. 126-27, for such an invocation to Mars or Ceres.

folk to maintain the light. The custom of carrying the plow around is recorded for Durham in 1378. A gift was made in that year to the men of "Maudelans" carrying their plow after Christmas, and in 1413 "in crastino Epiphanie" to those carrying the plow in Old Elvett, a street of Durham.<sup>60</sup> *Dives and Pauper* early in the fifteenth century refers to a superstitious practice of leading the plow about the fire.<sup>61</sup> Marriage plays like those of the modern plow boys I have not found recorded in the middle ages in connection with Plough Monday.

Valentine's Day represents an ancient love festival which may be mentioned here though its connection with the folk is inferred rather than proved by any evidence that I know. In England the choice of mates by divination and particularly by lot links the fête with customs common in marriage games of children, once the games of the folk. Repeated prohibitions in Anglo-Saxon times and later are directed against the use of divination and lots,<sup>62</sup> customs so firmly established in the folk-lore of love-making that they seem to form a bed-rock of English ritual connected with love. These practices are associated with various folk festivals but apparently belong primarily to the spring. A possible survival from folk ritual on Valentine's Day or its related festival St. Agnes' Eve is found in the highly sophisticated medieval game Ragman's Roll, which gives every indication of having developed from the drawing of lots at New Year to determine one's fortune or at Valentine to determine one's mate.<sup>63</sup> The courtly Valentine customs of the four-

<sup>60</sup> *Durham Account Rolls*, Surtees Soc., pp. 212, 224. Cf. also *Memorials of Ripon*, Surtees Soc., III, xxiv, n. and 209 for expenses in 1402 for "xij lib. de rosyne empt. [tam] pro expensis infra chorum quam pro distributione carucarum in die Epiphanie Domini, 12d." "Gatherings" are recorded for 1471 and 1485 (*ibid.*, pp. 215 and 220). Cf. Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, pp. 248-49.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Brand, I, 506. For the date of *Dives and Pauper* cf. II *N. and Q.*, IV, 321-23. Bale, *Image of Both Churches*, 1550, alludes to the "coniuringe of their ploughes" (quoted in *Memorials of Ripon*, III, xxiv).

<sup>62</sup> Fischer, *Aberglaube unter den Angel-Sachsen*, pp. 21 ff. Cf. also Krapp's edition of *Andreas*, note to ll. 1098-99.

<sup>63</sup> For Ragman's Roll cf. *N. E. D.*, s. v. For modern allotments in season rituals cf. *Jour. Brit. Arch. Assn.*, VIII, 231-32; Bottrell, *Traditions and Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall*, 2nd Series, pp. 285-86; *Folk-Lore Record*, II, 125; Brand, I, 3, 53, 59, 60; 4 *N. and Q.*, IX, 135; etc. Some form of the allotment of mates is frequent in children's wooing games. Cf.

teenth century, which were pretty certainly drawn from folk custom, show an equal degree of social sophistication.<sup>64</sup>

Though perhaps actual folk drama could hardly have played so large a part in the celebration of Shrovetide in England as in Germany without leaving more definite traces of its existence, there is some evidence that the season was one of greater importance for the people of England during the middle ages than in modern times. Fitzstephens in his description of twelfth century London says that at Shrovetide the boys of the schools devoted the morning to cock-fights under the control of the masters, while in the afternoon "all the young men of the city" engaged in football contests, various schools and various "crafts" of tradesmen opposing each other.<sup>65</sup> Among the expenditures of the master of Queen's College, Oxford, a payment for a cock at Shrovetide in 1326 as part of the regular expense of a school boy suggests the thorough conventionality of the custom.<sup>66</sup> Gifts of small sums at Shrovetide from 1386-7 on made to *ministri* or *servientes* at Durham may imply a celebration of some sort.<sup>67</sup> An elaborate and dramatic type of Shrovetide celebration, however, is described in a Norwich record of 1443.<sup>68</sup> One John Gladman

of disporte as is and ever hath ben accustomed in ony Cite or Burgh thurgh al this reame on fastyngong tuesday made a disporte wt his neighbourghs having his hors trapped with tyneseyle and otherwyse dysgysyn things crowned as King of Kristmesse in token that all merthe shuld end with ye

---

Maclagan, *Games of Argyleshire*, pp. 52-53; Gomme, *Traditional Games*, I, 101-8, and II, 90-102, 493-94; etc.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Manly, *Morabach Studien*, Studien zur engl. Philologie, I, pp. 286-87.

<sup>65</sup> Stow's *Survey of London*, Everyman's Library, p. 507. Cf. Chambers, I, 150 and n. 1. The ball games that survive in many localities of England as general struggles between the inhabitants of neighboring regions are commonly recognized as survivals of an old sacrificial feast. Early in the middle ages they had become no more than games in London. Cf. Maclagan, *Games of Argyleshire*, pp. 36-39, for evidence of the development of such ball games among the Celts as sports in the winter festivals some centuries earlier.

<sup>66</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, VI, 567. Cf. Brand, I, 70 n. for the popularity of cock-fighting in French schools in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A passage cited by Brand speaks of cock-fighting as part of "une feste ou dance."

<sup>67</sup> *Durham Account Rolls*, Surtees Soc., pp. 442 ff.

<sup>68</sup> *Records of the City of Norwich*, ed. Hudson and Tingey, I, 345-46.

twelve monthes of ye yer, afore hym eche moneth disgysed after ye seson yerof, and Lenten cladde in white with redde herrings skinnnes and his hors trapped with oyster shelles after him in token yt sadnesse and abstinence of merth shulde followe and an holy tyme; and so rode in diuerse stretes of ye Cite wt other peple wt hym disgysed making merthe and disporte and pleyes.

There is no reason to doubt this claim that in 1443 the Shrovetide "disporte" was an ancient institution and practically universal in the towns of England. Various terms are used here for the types of performance, including "play." It seems safe to infer, then, that in the time of Chaucer Shrovetide was the occasion for popular festivities in England corresponding to the Fastnacht celebrations among the kindred Germans.

The distinctive spring festival is Easter, with its subordinate folk festival of Hocktide. Though Easter gained its prominence from the church, its English name seems to be derived from an Anglo-Saxon goddess, Eostre, mentioned by Bede, who as a goddess of dawn and of Mother Earth was probably intimately associated with sex and fertilization rites.<sup>69</sup> Undoubtedly there existed in England and on the Continent in pagan times a festival with an important ritual which nearly coincided with Easter. The mummers' play in some parts of England is a "pace egg" play performed at Easter.<sup>70</sup> One chance record shows that pagan sex rites survived at Easter till the end of the thirteenth century, at least in the north, where paganism has kept a strong hold in modern folk-lore. The *Chronicle of Lanercost* under the year 1282 gives an account of how the parish priest of Inverkeithing was responsible for the observance of profane rites of Priapus in Easter week. He compelled the young girls of the village to engage in *choreae* in honor of Father Bacchus, while he bore aloft on a pole before the dancers a representation of the human organs of reproduction. Dancing himself, with those singing, says the Chronicle, he stirred all the spectators to wantonness by mimic action and shameless speech.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Chambers, I, 108, identifies her with Erce of the Anglo-Saxon plow-charm, and points out her correspondence with a number of other Teutonic deities.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 226-27.

<sup>71</sup> Kemble, *The Saxons in England*, I, 359 (*Chronicon de Lanercost*, ed. Stevenson, p. 109): "Insuper hoc tempore apud Inverchethin, in hebdomada paschae, sacerdos parochialis, nomine Johannes, Priapi prophana

The great church celebration at Easter, with its dramatic sepulchre rites and the resurrection plays, undoubtedly helped to overshadow such pagan customs as existed and to sap their vigor. But occasional evidence is found that a folk feast survived by the side of the elaborate church festival. Thus in the reign of Henry III it was customary for the peasants of Bureston, Worcester, to be given a white sheep and a black lamb at Easter,<sup>72</sup> presumably to be used for the lamb ale. I judge that frequent records of Easter feasts for the parishioners and minor clergy of great ecclesiastical establishments furnish the strongest presumption that pagan spring customs had a hold which could not be entirely broken in the church itself.<sup>73</sup> Sometimes these occasions were mere feasts in connection with the communion of the parishioners. Even the employment of minstrels in them may not be significant. But at Ripon there were payments at Easter in 1439-40 and 1447-8 for a game of the minor clergy spoken of as "le Pykestolle."<sup>74</sup> Here we have a glimpse of

parans, congregatis ex villa puellulis, cogeat eas, choreis factis, Libero patri circuire; ut ille feminas in exercitu habuit, sic iste, procacitatis causa, membra humana virtuti seminariae servientia super asserem artificata ante talem choream praeferibat, et ipse tripudians cum cantantibus motu mimico omnes inspectantes et verbo impudico ad luxuriam incitabat." In this connection Kemble quotes from the same chronicle an account of the use of an image of Priapus in a cattle charm in 1268. Adam of Bremen records a similar worship of Freyr at Upsala under the form of Priapus, and the offering of sacrifices to Freyr in connection with marriage (Kemble, p. 356). A description of this god moving through the land in his car attended by a troop of young priestesses and bringing plenty in his train (see Kemble, pp. 256-57, and Chadwick, *Folk-Lore*, XI, 292) suggests a combination of spring induction and sex rites for fertilization.

<sup>72</sup> J. H. Round, *Antiquary*, XI, 230-31, quotes from the Register of Worcester Priory: "De consuetudinibus villanorum cum fuerint ad operationem . . . habebunt unum arietem vel vj denarios"; and "Quilibet etiam dabit in ebdomada Paschæ pro alba ove cum nigro agno v denarios."

<sup>73</sup> Cf. *Inventories and Account Rolls of Jarrow and Monk-Wearmouth*, Surtees Soc., p. 50 (1368), "In vino dato post compotum et in Pascha pro parochianis et supervenientibus"; and p. 56 (1370), "In vino empto pro diebus festivalibus et communione parochianorum ad Pascha." Such entries occur repeatedly. Cf. *Durham Account Rolls*, Surtees Soc., p. 556 for payments at Durham to the *histriones* of the Bishop at the Paschal feast in 1355-6, and p. 620 for gifts to the cooks at Easter in 1424-5.

<sup>74</sup> *Memorials of Ripon*, Surtees Soc., III, 235: "Et in expensis factis xv ministris ludentibus in Resurreccione Domini et in festo Paschæ, 15d. Et in pane et cerevisio [sic] emptis pro ludentibus le Pykestolle in crastino Paschæ h. a. 1d." The entries on p. 240 for 1447-8 are similar.



folk games in connection with church feasts, for "Pykestolle," or pitch-stool, must be the popular festival game of the folk known as stool-ball. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries stool-ball was a common Easter game, and accounts of how girls and boys played it for tansy cakes or kisses reveal the love motives often associated with Easter customs.<sup>75</sup>

Hocktide, celebrated shortly after Easter, seems to be a pagan festival belonging to the season appropriated by the church for its Easter celebration. The name is kept for us because the festival served as an occasion for the meeting of courts and the dating of contracts. That the term had become firmly fixed in common usage by the middle of the twelfth century indicates strongly the early importance of the feast among the folk. The characteristic feature of the celebration—a contest between the men and the women of a community as opposing groups—is not recorded until the opening of the fifteenth century. In 1406 and 1456 orders forbidding the contests and struggles attendant upon the festival give us the first hint of customs that were perhaps at that time of indefinite age.<sup>76</sup> These orders were probably directed against just such customs as survived in sections of England for centuries—the capture of men and women by the opposite sex, with "lifting," removal of shoes, or the imposition of a tax. It is recorded that Edward I was taken in bed by ladies of the court on "the morrow of Easter" and made to pay a forfeit.<sup>77</sup> When the folk play for Hox Tuesday performed by Coventry men before Elizabeth developed is uncertain, but it seems to have been in existence in the fifteenth century.<sup>78</sup>

The most prominent spring festival of France and England was May Day. The date was not determined by the church calendar, and the significant customs of the day were probably not influenced by the church, despite the number of moralized carols that have survived in England. The vogue of May Day in the medieval period need not be argued here. A distinct celebration of May is specified

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Brand, I, 179-80, and II, 442; Gomme, *Traditional Games*, II, 217-20. Cf. also Chambers and Sidgwick, *Early English Lyrics*, pp. 8, 329 for the thirteenth century reverdies, "Lenten [or somer] is come with love to toune."

<sup>76</sup> Cf. *N. E. D.* for early uses of the term and for the two orders referred to. For other records cf. Brand, I, 185-86, and Chambers, I, 155-56.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Brand, I, 181-82.

<sup>78</sup> Chambers, I, 154-56, 187; II, 264-66, 357-62.

about 1244 in a complaint of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, against clerics who make "ludos quos vocant miracula; et alios ludos quos vocant Inductionem Maii sive Autumni."<sup>79</sup> The reverdies in early French and English lyrics indicate an influence exerted on the courtly lyric by the processional songs of the May induction. The famous early English lyric "Sumer is i-cumen in" was almost certainly composed for processions in such inductions of summer. The first line of this lyric is very close to the refrain—"For summer is a come unto day"—belonging to the processional song of the well-known Cornish induction ceremony for May Day called the "Padstow Hobby Horse." Another song from the same ceremony, and the processional song of the similar Helston Furry Day have the refrain "For summer is a come O, and winter is ago[ne O],"<sup>80</sup> which preserves the opening of a thirteenth century reverdie, "Somer is comen and winter gon."<sup>81</sup> Grosseteste's association of the *Inductio Maii* with the miracles, however, and his use of the term *ludi* suggest strongly a more dramatic celebration. An early definite reference to the celebration of May Day among the folk themselves is found in a record of payments by the village of King's Lynn to minstrels and a player (*ludenti*) on the first day of May, 1375 (44-5 Edward III).<sup>82</sup> In 1422-4 the men of Lydd were given a fee at New Romney "when they came with their *May*, and ours, on two occasions."<sup>83</sup> It is only a few years later, about 1437, that Bower in *Scotichronicon* speaks of the rabble as making merry

<sup>79</sup> Grosseteste, *Epistolae* (R. S.), p. 317; Chambers, I, 91. Some symbolic dress in the May induction is suggested in the order of the University of St. Andrew in the sixteenth century that there be "no bringing in of May in guise" (Hannay, *Statutes at the Period of the Reformation*, St. Andrews University Bull., VII, p. 18).

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Peter, *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*, XIX, 241-73; Worth, *West Country Garland*, pp. 157-64; *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, v, 273-76, 328-39 (cf. especially pp. 274-75 for references to other traditional reverdies, and pp. 331-39 for Miss Broadwood's interesting study of traces of cults of an earth-goddess, a sun-god, etc. to be found in these songs).

<sup>81</sup> Known from a religious adaptation. Cf. Chambers and Sidgwick, *op. cit.*, p. 329. Cf. Wright and Halliwell, *Reliquiae Antiquae*, I, 202, for the refrain, "Up son and mery wethir, somer drawith nere," from a ballad in the fifteenth century MS. of the Cambridge University Library Ff. I. 6.

<sup>82</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, XI, App. III, p. 221.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, v, 540.

with plays of Robin Hood, a feature of the May game which seems to represent the final stage of its development into formal drama.<sup>84</sup>

Much evidence could be assembled to show the use of wooing games in the spring fertilization feasts studied here, but which of the festivals they belonged to primarily cannot be determined. They form a complement to the sex rites described as closely connected with Easter. Robert Manning of Brunne in *Handlyng Synne*, 1303, gives the warning (ll. 996 ff.) :

3yf þou euer yn felde, eyþer in toune,  
Dedyt floure gerlande or coroune  
To makē wommen to gadyr þere,  
To se whychē þat feyrer were;—  
Þys ys azens þe commaundēment,  
And þe halyday for þe ys shent;  
Hyt ys a gaderyng for lecherye,  
And ful grete pryde, and hertē hye.

This holiday gathering of garlands was widely known in Europe from the middle ages as associated with the choice made by girls between rival lovers in the games, and with the selection of festival queens.<sup>85</sup> The wooing songs found in medieval lyric poetry were, I have no doubt, often sung on such occasions. "Colle to me the Rysshys grene," is the refrain of one such early lyric.<sup>86</sup> A church decree of the early thirteenth century forbidding the putting of rings of rush or other material upon the hands of girls *jocando*<sup>87</sup>—

<sup>84</sup> Chambers, I, 177, quotes from Bower's *Scotichronicon*, ed. Hearne, III, 774.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. *Ruodlieb*, VIII, 43 ff.; Boehme, *Geschichte des Tanzes*, I, 52-54, 63-64; Bolte, *Vierteljahrsch. f. Litteraturgeschichte*, II, 575-79; Bédier, *Revue des deux Mondes*, Jan., 1906, 404 ff., for "Jeu de la Chapelet," a song drama of this type about 1285; *Romaunt of the Rose*, ll. 776 ff., for a wooing dance; *Modern Philology*, XIV, 237-39, for various early wooing dramas in England.

<sup>86</sup> Furnivall's ed. of *Lanham's Letter*, p. clii. Cf. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*, pp. 56, 272.

<sup>87</sup> In Bishop Poore's Constitutions for Salisbury, later re-issued for Durham, Jones and Macray, *Charters and Documents of Salisbury*, p. 154 (see p. 128 for the re-issue, and Wilkins, I, 581, for the Durham form): "Nec quisquam annulum de junco, vel quacunque alia vili materia, vel pretiosa, jocando manibus innectat muliercularum, ut liberius cum eis fornicetur, ne dum jocari se putat oneribus matrimonialibus se abstringat." For Brand's view of the rush ring, cf. *Popular Antiquities*, II, 107 and note.

that is, I take it, in sport or play—may have been called forth by customs growing out of festival marriage. In the lines—

Where wooers hoppe in and out, long time may bryng  
Him that hoppeth best, at last to have the ryng.  
I hoppyng without for a ryng of a rushe—<sup>88</sup>

John Heywood seems to allude to dancing contests between wooers with a rush ring as prize. These passages give evidence for at least one type of wooing and marriage game in the medieval festival. Modern folk-lore points to a wide use of such games in an early period.

It is difficult to separate the summer games from those of the late spring. May Day and Whitsun, the two great folk festivals of the spring-summer period from April to June, were often much alike in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For though May queens and Robin Hood games belonged to May, and summer kings to Whitsun primarily, the May game was not infrequently a feature of June festivals.<sup>89</sup> The processions, however, are the most confusing element in the spring-summer celebrations. Processions are associated with many seasonal feasts including those of winter or early spring like Innocents' Day and Shrovetide. Indeed the procession was practically indispensable in festival celebrations. But the great parades or processions often known in medieval England as ridings seem to have been especially common in all of the late spring and the summer seasonal feasts of the folk as well as at Corpus Christi or on various saints' days of the same period. The induction of the new season lies at the base of many of these ridings, but the great principle seems to have been that of carrying the sacred symbol—whether May-boughs, season kings and queens, figures of pagan gods, or Christian symbols—around the boundaries of the fields or through the villages as a magical rite for keeping the tribal groups and their homes or the growing crops safe from harm.

<sup>88</sup> Heywood, *The Proverbs and Epigrams*, Spenser Soc., p. 7; Brand, II, 349.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Chappell, *Old Eng. Pop. Music* (1893), I, 33-34, for payments of Henry VII "To the maydens of Lambeth for a May," July 8, 1492, and "To the May-game at Greenwich," June 6, 1499; and Pierce, *Marprelate Tracts*, pp. 226-27, for a "Summer Lord" with his "May-game." Cf. note 122 for other transfers.

Between the church and the folk such rites were parceled out or repeated in a dozen festivals of the spring-summer group.

The salient feature of Rogations was the procession, or perambulation, around the bounds of the land. This custom of "beating the bounds," though pagan in origin—it was known among the Romans<sup>90</sup>—and usual in England from early in the Anglo-Saxon period till long after furious attacks were made upon it during the Reformation, is rarely recorded independently of church control. Possibly the payment at King's Lynn in 1325-6 (9-10 Edward III) of 6*d.* "pro pulsatione libertatis"<sup>91</sup> was on an occasion when the village people performed their own rites. The dragon commonly carried in the procession and accepted as a symbol in the liturgy of Rogations<sup>92</sup> seems to be a survival of paganism.<sup>93</sup> The *Chronicle of Lanercost* in accounting for a fire which destroyed the church of Cleveland in 1288 speaks casually of the monks, who, "having performed their solemn litanies, were returning through the fields and houses" on the "vigil of the Lord's Ascension," that is, the last day of Rogations.<sup>94</sup> Especially in the passage through the houses there is a suggestion here of magic rites surviving alongside a Christian ritual. This recession of the monks might well represent the detritus of an ancient processional dance which may

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, pp. 56, 57, 111-14, 124-28 for such festivals among the Romans, and Golther, *Handbuch der germanischen Mythologie*, pp. 578-79 for early Teutonic records. Marking the bounds of village lands was the professed purpose of most recorded perambulations. Cf. Brand, I, 197 ff. Leather, *Folk-Lore of Herefordshire*, pp. 150-51, gives a record of a perambulation at the end of the sixth century in connection with establishing the boundaries after land grants, and an account of two in 1300 after the settlement of claims.

<sup>91</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, ix, App. III, p. 215. Cf. Withington, *English Paganry*, p. 35, for records of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

<sup>92</sup> For some details of the symbolism cf. *Memorials of Ripon*, Surtees Soc., III, 234, note on the payment to the men carrying the dragon in 1439-40; for the purchase of a new dragon at Wells in 1400-1 and for repairing the dragon in 1449-50, cf. *Hist. MSS. Com.*, *MSS. of the Dean and Chapter of Wells*, II, 37, 79.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Frazer, *Magic Art*, II, 155-70; *Balder the Beautiful*, I, 161, 195, II, 37; *Dying God*, pp. 78 ff., for the dragon in season festivals.

<sup>94</sup> Translation in *Scot. Hist. Rev.*, VI, 287-88. Cf. the original, "Conventu itaque solemnnes agente Litanias, per campos et domos revertente, subito erupit flamma" (Stevenson, *Chronicon de Lanercost*, Bannatyne Club, p. 123).

have been rather widely used among the folk, to judge from the varied early records of processional dances,<sup>95</sup> like that in honor of St. Aldhelm, and from modern survivals like the procession on Furry Day in Cornwall where the celebrants danced through the houses and streets.<sup>96</sup> The folk feasts and games at Rogations forbidden by the Council of Clovesho in the Anglo-Saxon period cannot be traced in the middle ages, but various records of a later period indicate that folk games and customs similar to those of Whitsuntide prevailed at Rogations.<sup>97</sup>

It is clear that perambulations and processions, connected probably with ceremonies for the expulsion of death, winter, etc.,<sup>98</sup> occurred in other feasts. Two fixed feasts of this type—preceding May Day, near which Rogation days often fall—were St. George's, April 23, and St. Mark's, April 25. The chief feature of St. George's Day was a procession in which the dragon was carried, as at Rogations.<sup>99</sup> The procession on St. Mark's Day, so far as we

<sup>95</sup> Cf. note 26; *Orfeo and Heurodis*, ll. 290-94; etc.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. C. J. Sharp, *The Morris Book*, v, 96-102, and Thurstan Peter, *Journal of Royal Institution of Cornwall*, xix, 260, for the Cornish custom. The words of one of the most popular singing games of children—"Round and round the village . . . In and out the windows"—seem with little doubt to have sprung from this custom (cf. Gomme, *Traditional Games*, II, 122-43; Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*, pp. 128, 129; MacLagan, *Games of Argyleshire*, pp. 65, 66). The related "Thread the Needle" is often recorded as a processional dance in connection with spring festivals (cf. Gomme, *op. cit.*, II, 228-32). Other processional dances in the spring or summer festivals are known, as those of the men at Tideswell, Winster, and Castleton. These are often called morris dances. The morris itself often has processional features, as in the "Morris on." Cf. Sharp, *Morris Book*, I, 118-120; II, 15, 43-46; v, 8-13, 103-105; and see Chambers, I, 164-65.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. note 101 below. An ale was held on Rogations Sunday at Basingbourne in 1497-8 (Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 290). Machyn, *Diary*, Camden Soc., p. 236, records a Rogations procession in 1560 in Buckinghamshire and Cornwall, and adds, "in dyvers places they had good chere after." Cf. also Brand, I, 201, 205, 210; and Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, pp. 263-65, for evidence that at least in some places Rogations was celebrated with feasting and folk-games. In general the evidence seems to indicate that by the end of the middle ages the church had succeeded in practically eliminating folk customs in connection with the perambulations of Rogations.

<sup>98</sup> Frazer, *Dying God*, pp. 205-61, and *Scapegoat*, pp. 152-252.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Frazer, *Magic Art*, II, 75, 76, 79 (Green George as a vegetation

know, had no distinguishing features.<sup>100</sup> A number of records quoted later in connection with summer festivals show the prominence of processions through the fields at Whitsuntide and on such saints' days as that of St. William.<sup>101</sup> The processional features of these feasts lent themselves to pageantry, however. In the feasts belonging more strictly to summer we find elements more important for drama.

From the point of view of the folk and their games, Pentecost, or Whitsuntide, must have been one of the most important of the medieval summer festivals, though before 1400 there are few accounts of folk games specifically connected with the day. The claim of the plowmen of King's Ripton to immunity for eight days at Pentecost as an old privilege from the twelfth century has already been cited. Evidence of folk practices connected with the day is met early. One custom, mentioned by Gervase of Tilbury<sup>102</sup> around 1211—that of drinking dew or bathing in it before eating bread at Whitsun—may be related to a feast and a bit of ritual not infrequently recorded in modern folk-lore in connection with the May or summer celebrations.<sup>103</sup> Under the year 1337 Walsingham<sup>104</sup> records a

daemon), and 163-64, 324-48 (St. George as spring god, protector of tribes, herds, etc.) for various records of ceremonies and processions on the Continent showing a closer connection with spring agricultural rites than do the St. George ridings recorded in England, which were according to the earliest extant accounts affairs of the fraternities and guilds (Chambers, I, 221-24; Withington, *English Pageantry*, pp. 23-32).

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 71 for a payment on the occasion of processions on St. Mark's Day, 1480-1, at St. Edmund, Salisbury, where from the middle of the fifteenth century there was an elaborate series of processions at all these summer feasts. Cf. Brand, I, 192-96.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. 10 *N. and Q.*, ix, 401, 456; xi, 381, 384 for a collection of records of early perambulations and processions at Rogations, Ascension, etc. Cf. *Rites of Durham*, Surtees Soc., pp. 104-8, for a sixteenth century account of processions at Durham on St. Mark's Day, Rogations, Holy Thursday, Whitsunday, Trinity Sunday, and Corpus Christi; and pp. 287-88 for various notes and references. Passing references to these festival celebrations are innumerable in the middle ages.

<sup>102</sup> *Otia Imperialia*, ed. Liebrecht, pp. 2, 57.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Brand, I, 311 (at Midsummer); III, 300; and the refrain of a popular spring wooing song, "For it's dabbling in the dew makes the milk-maids fair" (Sharp, *One Hundred English Folksongs*, pp. xxxi and 100).

<sup>104</sup> *Historia Anglicana* (R. S.), I, 199. Cf. *Reliquiae Antiquae*, I, 285-86, for the decree of Bishop Iscanus at the end of the twelfth century against divination on New Year's and St. John the Baptist's Day.

story of how a maiden, warned by a dream at Pentecost to meet her lover in a wood, met a demon with fatal consequences. Here we have a suggestion of the love divinations common later at Whitsun. Payments made at Pentecost by the treasurer of St. Paul's in London for the years 1276-9<sup>105</sup> suggest the Whitsun ale. In 1371 and 1375 *ministralli* were paid at York "for four days at Pentecost." In a similar entry here about 1477 the performers are called *histriones*.<sup>106</sup> There was probably a great annual celebration of Whitsun at York. I shall cite later a number of fourteenth century references to summer kings and summer games, most of which likely belong to Whitsun, for at least in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Whitsun was the great occasion for the summer *ludi*, being almost universally celebrated by the folk of town and village churches<sup>107</sup> with great feasts, ales, summer kings and queens, and occasionally morris dances, Robin Hood plays, and other forms of drama.

Perhaps something of the nature of the Whitsun game in the early period may be inferred from medieval accounts of royal Whitsun celebrations, which show an interesting similarity to the modern king games. These royal festivals were apparently the occasions for actual coronation ceremonies and for great court gatherings with feasts in which kings and queens participated. One Anglo-Saxon chronicle gives a poetic account of Edgar's coronation

<sup>105</sup> *Archaeological Journal*, III, 252-54, "Accounts of the sacrist and keeper of the treasury": 1276, "Item in brachinellis, die pentecostes, ijs."; this is repeated in 1278-9, and there is added, "Item, in mundacione ecclesie contra Pentecostem." The anonymous contributor suggests that "brachinellis" indicates a Whitsun ale, being either a possible error for "'crachinellis,' cracknels," or derived from "*brachinum*, or *braciatorium*, a brewery." Interesting details in regard to the banners of summer processions are given here from these and other records.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. note 133.

<sup>107</sup> See Hobhouse, *Church-Wardens' Accounts*, Somerset Record Soc., pp. 84 ff., for Whitsun ales at Yatton from 1445 to 1547 at which minstrels were paid regularly; *Trans. Shropshire Arch. Assn.*, Third Series, III, 103-22, IV, 86-113, etc., for records of annual Whitsun ales with kings, plays, etc. at Worfield from about 1500; and note 248 below for the records of Reading. 10 *N. and Q.*, IX, 456, refers to *Landboc sive Registrum Monasterii de Winchelcumba* [ed. Royce], II, 537, for a medieval "account of the procession of the villagers of Cow Honeybourne to Evesham on the Tuesday in Whitsun week."



at Whitsun in 973 with crowds in attendance and with much "bliss," while the Peterborough Chronicle records among many Whitsun feasts a great one given by William the Conqueror in 1085-6 at which a son was knighted, and many by William Rufus and Henry I.<sup>108</sup> Three great court festivals seem to have become conventional, Christmas, Easter, and Whitsun. Higden in the fourteenth century was still reporting the grandeur with which the Conqueror celebrated these festivals.<sup>109</sup> They are recorded for William II and often for Henry I,<sup>110</sup> and continued to be occasions for feasting in the reign of Edward III.<sup>111</sup> Not less trustworthy because they are literary instead of historical are our accounts of Whitsun at the court of Arthur. Geoffrey, Wace, and especially Layamon<sup>112</sup> describe the celebration in great detail. Layamon tells us that after Easter was passed and "sumer com to longe" Arthur decided to wear his crown at a Whitsun assembly of his folk. The festivities included an enormous procession of kings, bishops, and knights, feasts given by the royal pair, and a three days' round of sports in the fields, where tents were pitched. Four kings, sword and mace bearers, and other attendants went in Arthur's train, and four queens waited on Guenevere. Robert of Brunne also gives an elaborate account of this Whitsun feast at Caerleon.<sup>113</sup> His statement (ll. 11350-1) that each unwedded knight had to choose a "lemman" is interesting in the light of wooing customs common in modern spring and summer games. These accounts illustrate festival customs of the upper classes, but from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth, the folk May and Whitsun games have been organized in England after the same fashion, with a king and queen, attendants as sword and mace bearers, feasts in arbors or halls, sports, and wooing games or matings.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Earle and Plummer, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, pp. 118, 216-17, 219, 230, 234, 235, 239, 241, etc.

<sup>109</sup> *Polychronicon* (R. S.), VII, 316.

<sup>110</sup> Earle and Plummer, *op. cit.*, pp. 219, 230, 234, 235, 239, 241, etc.

<sup>111</sup> *Archaeologia*, XXXI, 8 ff., wardrobe accounts. These, like the feasts of the earlier kings, were held in different cities. See Chambers, II, 234-38, for the great Pentecost feast of 1306 at which the future Edward II was knighted.

<sup>112</sup> *Brut*, ll. 24241-48, 24310 ff.; cf. Madden's edition, III, 391.

<sup>113</sup> *Ye Story of Inglande*, I, 384 ff.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *Antiquary*, VII, 34; Dyer, *British Popular Customs*, pp. 281-89; *Jour. Brit. Arch. Assn.*, XLIV, 51; *Folk-Lore*, VIII, 307-24; Brand, I, 276-84;

The chief distinctly summer festival, that of Midsummer, was usually celebrated in England as in Germany on the Eve of St. John. St. Peter and St. Paul's Day, slightly later in June, which in 876 we have seen was one of the established festivals, seems at the end of the middle ages to have been supplementary to St. John's Eve.<sup>115</sup> The great church festival of Corpus Christi probably did not seriously affect the popularity of folk games on Midsummer Eve. Perhaps in attracting to itself the elaborate dramas which had been performed on various festival and saints' days long before it was established, Corpus Christi left the folk feast and games dominant at Whitsun and Midsummer. The earliest account of the celebration of St. John's Eve in England which is known to me is found in a discussion of the origin of the name Barnwell, written in 1295. The name is here derived from the pagan wakes on St. John's Eve celebrated anciently by youths with games and *cantilenae* at the well.<sup>116</sup> The wakes would then date earlier than 1112 when the name was adopted. According to a monk of Winchelscombe, who in the middle of the fifteenth century described the *ludi* of St. John's Eve, it was customary to feast and drink, to engage in dancing and in base *ludi* conducive to lechery, to build bonfires, to carry torches through the fields, and to roll flaming wheels down the hills.<sup>117</sup> The monk has copied older accounts,<sup>118</sup>

etc. See Frazer, *Golden Bough*, *passim*, but especially *Magic Art*, II, 82 ff. for many records from the Continent.

<sup>115</sup> Stow, *Survey*, Everyman's Library, pp. 93-95, mentions "midsummer watches" in London as occurring, at the opening of the Renaissance, on the Eves of St. John and St. Peter. The play on the Apocalypse seen by Henry VIII on St. John's Eve, 1535, was to be repeated on the Eve of St. Peter (*Letters and Papers Henry VIII*, VIII, 373). Cf. Brand, I, 303 (Ireland), 308, 326, 328, 337-38.

<sup>116</sup> Quoted in Herrig's *Archiv*, CXXXI, 429, from J. W. Clark, *Liber memorandum ecclesie de Bernewelle*, p. 41: Barnwell is said to mean "fontes puerorum, eo tempore appellati, eo quod pueri et adolescentes semel per annum, in vigilia scilicet Nativitatis sancti Johannis baptiste, illic convenientes more Anglorum luctamina et alia ludicria exercebant puerilia et cantilenis et musicis instrumentis sibi invicem applaudebant. Unde propter turbam puerorum et puellarum illic concurrencium et ludencium mos inolevit, ut in eodem die illic convenirit negociandi gracia turba vendencium et emencium."

<sup>117</sup> In *Cat. of Harl. MSS.*, II, 661, the following passages from his homilies in Harl. MS. 2345 are quoted: "Dico ejus [S. Johannis] Nativitatem cum gaudio; non illo tamen gaudio quo Stulti vani, & prophani amatores mundi

but his trustworthiness need not for that reason be questioned since the customs which he describes were fairly uniform in northwestern Europe from an early period of the Christian era and were recorded in much the same form for centuries afterward in Great Britain.<sup>119</sup> The feast or ale accompanied with dance and song, which is so usual in folk celebrations, is also associated with these June festivals of the saints in the records of a later period.<sup>120</sup> In the reign of Henry

hujus, accensis Ignibus per plateas (Anglice, *Bone-fires*) turpibus & illicitis Ludis, Commessionibus, & Ebrietatibus, Cubilibus, & Impudicijs intendentes, eam celebrare solent."

"Dicamus de tripudijs que in Vigilia S. Johannis fieri solent; quorum tria genera. In Vigilia enim beati Johannis colligunt pueri, in quibusdam regionibus, ossa & quedam alia immunda, & in simul cremant, et exinde producitur fumus in aere. Cremant? etiam Brandas (seu Fasces) et circuiunt arva cum Brandis. Tertium, de Rota quam faciunt volvi. Quod cum immunda cremant, hoc habent ex Gentilibus." Cf. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*, pp. 135-36, 274, and Gomme, *Traditional Games*, I, 256-59, for forfeits in games of passing the torch, apparently a survival of having a succession of runners to carry a lighted torch. The German fackeltanz (cf. Boehme, *Geschichte des Tanzes*, I, 75 ff.), the torch-dance of the Danes (cf. Cox-Steenstrup, *Medieval Popular Ballad*, p. 12), torch-bearers in English masques, etc., with little doubt preserve in festival dances relics of old fire rituals.

<sup>119</sup> Chambers (I, 126, n. 4) traces the account from Beletus of the twelfth century (Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Ser. Lat.*, CCII, 141) to Durandus, *Rationale Div. Offic.*, VII, 14, and from him to the monk of Winchelscombe. The attacks on folk games were constantly borrowed from older writers, and this furnishes one bit of evidence in regard to the uniformity of the festival games of Europe in the middle ages. Reference has already been made to such borrowing in the Anglo-Saxon period (note 4). The Constitutions of Kirkham, 1255 (Wilkins, I, 707), forbid various folk celebrations "prout in patrum et praedecessorum constitutionibus est constitutum." Later Northbrooke used Brandt's *Narrenschiff* and the church fathers, and was used in turn by Stubbs. All the opponents of the theatre borrowed for the material of their attacks, and Prynne almost exhausted the literature of the subject.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Brand, I, 298-336; Chambers, I, 125-29; Golther, *Handbuch der germanischen Mythologie*, pp. 573-77.

<sup>120</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, v, 520. In 1450-2 payments were made at Lydd for "2 Mydsomerys candles, for the Common House, to stand there on the night of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist," and to "minstrels of the Duke of Bokyngham, when here on the Eve of the Apostles Peter and Paul." Cf. *ibid.*, XII, App. IX, p. 431 for order of 1486 freeing the bailiffs and sheriffs of Gloucester from the old custom of paying for "the Kesiardes Dynner at Mydsomer, and for the drynkyng on Midsomer Eve." The cus-

III a ram, presumably for the folk feast, and a procession around the corn with fire are mentioned as properly belonging to St. John's Eve celebrations at East Monkton.<sup>121</sup>

For the most part, however, it is impossible to connect directly with any particular feast day the abundant evidence which goes to show that from a very early period in England the summer and late spring festivals were celebrated elaborately with dance and song and games. In fact the organization under a king and queen and the dramatic games in vogue must often have been very similar in the various summer fêtes early in the middle ages as well as at a later and better known period. This would result not only from the fact that, despite some fundamental differences, the rituals and superstitions connected with the various spring and summer feasts are frequently the same since the same purpose underlies many of them, but chiefly from the fact that the social influence made of the games merely popular entertainments to be shifted and expanded at will.<sup>122</sup>

tom well known later among village players of carrying their games and plays to neighboring towns and villages in the days following a great festival may have been exemplified early in connection with Midsummer at Lydd, where in 1430-1 a payment was made to the "players of Romene, who shewed their play here on Sunday after the Feast of the Nativity of John the Baptist" (*ibid.*, v, 517). Cf. Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, pp. 239-41, for many fifteenth century records of garnishing churches at Midsummer. Cf. Withington, *English Pageantry*, p. 38, for the Midsummer "watch" in London at the end of the fourteenth century.

<sup>121</sup> *Law Mag. and Law Review*, xiv, 350, n., quotes from Add. ms. 17450, f. 215 b: "Item Carucarii et alii Wykemanni debent habere i multonem et ferre ignem circa bladum domini in vigilia Nativitatis beati Johannis Baptiste."

<sup>122</sup> Besides kings and queens and processions, from Easter to Midsummer the same features appear in the games. Sex rites and especially divinations were employed at Midsummer (Brand, I, 311, 319, 330 ff.). "May games" with lords and ladies of May, poles, morris dances, Robin Hood and his group, the Nine Worthies, giants, devils, soldans and Moors, St. George and the Dragon, elephant and castle, etc., occurred at London in the middle of the sixteenth century from the end of May to the end of June (Machyn, *Diary*, pp. 20, 89, 137, 201, 230, 283). The May pole was used at Hocktide (10 *N. and Q.*, xi, 488 and xii, 71-73) and at Midsummer (Kerry, *History of the Municipal Church of St. Lawrence, Reading*, p. 235, for trees at Whitsuntide from 1514 to 1517; Chambers, II, 335, for a decree against singing about "summer treis" at Aberdeen in 1555; Brand, I, 318 for a "summer pole" in Cornwall on Midsummer Eve, 1790). Dragons were usual, as at Rogations or on St. George's Day (Brand, I, 320-22).

The place which these summer pastimes held among the people may be judged from numerous early references—references which, so far as they are specific, point to the conclusion that there was nothing essentially new in the games when fuller pictures of them are drawn in the descriptions that multiply from the end of the fifteenth century to modern times. The decree of Bishop Chanteloup in 1240 against *ludi* “de Rege et Regina” was probably directed chiefly against the king and queen of summer, who belong par excellence to the folk, though it was doubtless intended to cover similar games of other seasonal feasts. Robert Manning of Brunne in *Handlyng Synne*, 1303, makes a general attack on popular amusements:

Karolles, wrastlynges, or somour games,  
Who so euer haunteþ any swyche shames  
Yn cherche, oþer yn chercheþerde,  
Of sacrylage he may be a ferde;  
Or entyrludës, or syngynge,  
Or tabure bete, or oþer pypyng,  
Alle swychë þyng forbodyn es,  
Whyle þe prest stondeþ at messe                      [ll. 8989 ff.].

In a political poem mocking the Scots, written presumably after the battle of Kyrkenclif, 1306, Robert Bruce’s career as a king is compared to that of a summer king:

Hii maden kyng of somere, so hii ner ne sholde,  
Hii setten on ys heved a croune of rede golde,  
And token him a kyneþerde [scepter], so me kyng sholde.<sup>123</sup>

Giants were carried on various occasions (*ibid.*, pp. 323-25). At Chester the Midsummer procession included nearly all the figures that entered into any of the summer games (Chambers, II, 356): “the Doctors and little God,” “the divill in his fethers,” a devil called “cuppes and cans” with a man in woman’s clothes, a dragon with six naked boys beating at it, four giants, an elephant and castle, a unicorn, a camel, a luce, an ante-lope, morris-dancers, the “Mayor’s Mount” and the “Merchants’ Mount”—the latter a festival ship—Abraham and Isaac, Balaam and his Ass. A record for Norwich in 1527 makes it clear that the lord of misrule, a figure belonging primarily to Christmas, was accustomed to hold sway at the annual Whitsun celebration (*ibid.*, p. 387). Chambers points out the prevalence of Midsummer bonfires from Epiphany to Midsummer (I, 126). Well wakes were equally widespread in the summer festivals. At Midsummer dramatic performances were not infrequent.

<sup>123</sup> Harl. ms. 2253, printed in Ritson’s *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, ed. Hazlitt, pp. 25-33, and in Böhdeker, *Altengl. Dichtungen*, pp. 121-34. One

A later line, "Nou kyng Hobbe in the mures jongeth," suggests the connection of the custom chiefly with the peasantry. The description of the execution of Frisell in the same poem apparently pictures this follower of Bruce as being mocked at his execution with the splendors of a summer king. He is said to have been brought into London with a garland of leaves on his head, and to have been led through Cheap later on the way to execution crowned with a garland "of the newe guyse."

He rideth throuh the sité, as y telle may,  
With gomen, ant wyth solas, that wes here play,  
To Londone brugge hee nome the way.

Fitzstephens in his description of London sports in the twelfth century shows that the "holydays in summer" were the occasion among the young men for athletic contests—"leaping, archery, wrestling, stone-throwing, slinging javelins beyond a mark, and also fighting with bucklers"—while the maidens, led by Cytherea (their festival queen, I presume), danced merrily beneath the moon.<sup>124</sup> About 1250 the students at Oxford were forbidden to conduct masked dances or summer processions.<sup>125</sup> Numerous references

of the chronicles imputes to Bruce's wife a comparison of his reign to that of a summer king (*Flores Historiarum* [R. S.], III, 130; cf. Chambers, I, 173), and Ritson thinks the passage quoted above inspired by her supposed remark. But during the wars of Edward I both Scotch and English seem to have used in festival games carols satirizing their opponents (cf. Wright, *Political Songs*, Camden Soc., for numerous songs of the sort preserved in Langtoft's *Chronicle*), and this practice probably suggested the ironic figure on Bruce and the mockery of Frisell as a summer king at his execution.

<sup>124</sup> Stow's *Survey of London*, Everyman's Library, p. 508. Cf. Riley, *Mun. Gild. Lond. Liber Custumarum* (R. S.), pp. 282-83, for a decree of about 1280 forbidding schools for buckler players, and contests with bucklers. Cf. *Munimenta Acad. Oxon.* (R. S.), p. 526, for some details of a buckler contest in 1442.

<sup>125</sup> *Mun. Acad. Oxon.*, p. 18: "ne quis choreas cum larvis, seu strepitu aliquo, in ecclesiis vel plateis ducat, vel sertatus vel coronatus corona ex foliis arborum vel florum vel aliunde composita alicubi incedat." The first part of this passage seems to refer to the winter or early spring expulsion, and the second to the induction ritual of late spring and early summer games. "Aliunde" is suggestive, for early in the fourteenth century well-to-do citizens of London had garlands of precious metal forged which seem to have been worn at feasts by masters of the various guilds (cf. Riley, *Memorials of London*, pp. 44, 133, and n.).

slightly later speak for the popularity of these summer festivals. The expression "As foles þat gedirs til a somere gamen" occurs about 1340 in Hampole's *Psalter*, xvi, 12. Accidia in *Piers Plowman*, B Text, Passus v, l. 413, ignores vigils and fasting days but enjoys "a somer-game of souteres" [cobblers]. Wycliffe refers to "a wilde pleiere of someres gamenes,"<sup>126</sup> and Jankin according to the Wife of Bath points his moral with the story of a wife who "was at a someres game With-oute [her husband's] witing,"<sup>127</sup> A summer king visited Winchester College in 1412,<sup>128</sup> and Tintinhull in 1447-8.<sup>129</sup>

The influence of paganism upon festival celebrations under ecclesiastical control seems to me to be illustrated with especial significance in the early efforts of the church to supplant the summer feasts of the folk in wood and field with church pageantry and plays, particularly miracles. Performers were hired for the celebration of Rogations, Pentecost, and various other church feasts. Thus, for the Feast of the Ascension there is a record of *histriones* at Durham about 1360<sup>130</sup> and at St. Peter's College, Cambridge, in 1388-9;<sup>131</sup> for Ascension and Corpus Christi minstrels were paid at Dover in 1365-7;<sup>132</sup> and for Pentecost and other festivals *ministralli* or *histriones* were employed at York from 1371 on.<sup>133</sup> In

<sup>126</sup> *English Works*, ed. Matthews, E. E. T. S., No. 74, p. 246.

<sup>127</sup> Wife of Bath's prologue, ll. 648-49.

<sup>128</sup> Chambers, II, 246: "In dat. Rico. Kent bochier tempore regno suo vocat. Somer-kyng, xij d."

<sup>129</sup> Hobhouse, *Church-Wardens' Accounts*, p. 183: "It. in expensis Regis de Montagu apud Tyntenhull existentis estivali, iij d."

<sup>130</sup> Chambers, II, 242.

<sup>131</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, I, 81.

<sup>132</sup> *Archæologia Cantiana*, xxv, 80, 85, chamberlains' accounts: 1365-6, "Given to John Rusteler [the town 'Piper,' p. 85] and others on the feasts of Corpus Christi and the Ascension, iijs. iiij d." The payment the next year is merely to "minstrela."

<sup>133</sup> Raine, *Fabric Rolls of York Minster*, Surtees Soc., p. 124 (1371), "Ministrallis in festo translacionis S. Willelmi, 3s. 4d. Eisdem pro iiij diebus Pentecostis, 13s. 4d."; p. 127, like entries for 1375; p. 135 (ca. 1477), "In riguardo dato histrionibus interessentibus in festo translacionis S. Willelmi quatuor diebus in sept. Pentecostes, et deposicione S. Willelmi, prout usitatum est annis precedentibus, 26s. 8d." These entries usually follow payments for carrying feretories and banners. A payment for carrying the banner of St. Peter "in diebus rogationum" follows ca. 1430, and ca. 1477 the payment for carrying the feretory of St. William at Pentecost.

preparation for these feasts a tent or castle was often erected. At York, in 1331-2 and later, a castle was used at Pentecost, and the procession around the bounds apparently took place in connection with it. At Ripon a tent was erected in 1393-4 and later, the entry for 1505 being "pro sublevacione le Castri diebus Rogacionum 6d."<sup>134</sup> Castles were in use at Beverley before 1377 for the procession of St. John at Rogationtide corresponding to that of St. William at York. Many or all of the Beverley guilds erected wooden castles in which their members sat during the morning procession and afterward held a feast, leaving to enter the procession on its return to the city.<sup>135</sup> In 1368 a "palace" was built "at the door of the hall" at Exeter College, Oxford, for a feast in the "pleasure-garden" during Lent term, probably on the Eve of St. Thomas.<sup>136</sup> Records of drama for which the minstrels and castles

<sup>134</sup> *Memorials of Ripon*, III, 120, 137, 156, 175. In a note to the entry for 1505 (p. 198) the following records for York are given as supplied by Canon Raine:

1331-2. In factura castelli, cum uno culterays empt. pro eodem, 6d. In ij zourthgistes, 12d. Thomæ Burheued conducto ad castellum ligandum et preparandum 30d. In puto quando levaverunt meremium castelli, 2d.

1350-1. In j castro facto in honore S. Willelmi, 5d.

1372-3. In j castello facto in festo Pentecostes, 12d.

1380-1. Pro factura de castello ad portam monasterii in sept. Pentec. 9d.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Leach, *Beverley Town Documents*, Selden Soc., pp. xliii, lviii, lix, 31, 45, 75-80, 99, 112, 113, and 115. In 1375 the Shoemakers agreed that all should wear their livery in the castle; in 1394 all agreed to be at the making and covering of the castle and to be in their castle during the procession of St. John. In 1377 the Tailors agreed that all should be "in their castle on Monday of the Rogation Days." Records of various crafts as of the Tanners in 1416 mention the obligation to build a wooden castle. The records of the Tanners in 1416 also mention the entering (after dinner apparently in the castle) of the craft into the procession on its return. The castles of other crafts are recorded in the years 1493-8.

<sup>136</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, II, 129. At the University of St. Andrew about 1432 the feast of the University on the day of St. John the Evangelist, which included mass, procession, dinner, and possibly plays, was celebrated "ante portam Latinam." In the kindred feast of the University of Glasgow in 1462 flowers and branches were provided for the procession, and "After dinner, the company proceeded *ad locum solatii convenientiorem*" for the performance of an interlude (Hannay, *Statutes at the Period of the Reformation*, St. Andrews Univ. Bull., VII, pp. 17, 21, 31, 99). At Durham a "castle" as a permanent part of a building may have been used for drama.



may have been used on these feast days are lacking, but the place of the castle in pagan ritual and popular pageantry contributes, I believe, indirect evidence for the admixture of pagan elements in the seasonal feasts as celebrated by the early church.

The castles for feasts in connection with midsummer festivals, and the castles or tents in the field in which sacred emblems were placed and in connection with which the church celebrated some of its rites, perhaps including miracle plays, were very probably substitutes for arbors, bowers, or castles in fields, at trees and wells, or on hills, where pagans performed sacred marriages or celebrated the passions of their deities with the death and resurrection of the year daemon. The wide vogue of such pagan miracles is not to be doubted.<sup>137</sup> It is evident also that the bower, tent, or castle was the scene of pagan spring rites. In the Roman perambulations chapels or shrines called *sacella*<sup>138</sup> were used as depositories for religious objects. There are numerous references to towers or castles of prophetesses in Teutonic religion and myth and to varied rites at such shrines.<sup>139</sup> Robert of Brunne's allusion to a "Maydenes-kastel" and his statement, "Wiþ maydenes had he [Ebranc] þer his play,"<sup>140</sup> hint at sex rites common in pagan rituals. When its significance as a pagan shrine had faded out, the bower or castle seems to have been used later, independently of church drama, in

Cf. *Durham Account Rolls*, p. 596 (1388-9), "Item Janitori de Castro ad Natale, 18d." (repeated for 1390-1); p. 392 (1390-1), "uno ostio ex opposito castelli, 2d."; p. 283 (1526-7), "vasta sub Mota Castri," 16d.; and pp. 100, 107, 109 for walls of *castrum*. Cf. also the following from Maxstoke Priory accounts in 1430 (Chambers, II, 384): "pro ientaculis puorum eleemosynae exeuntium ad aulam in castro ut ibi ludum peragerent in die Purificationis, xivd. Unde nihil a domini [Clinton] thesaurario, quia saepius hoc anno ministralli castri fecerunt ministralsiam in aula conventus et Prioris ad festa plurima sine ullo riguardo." Was the "castrum" a "playerchambre" such as is recorded for Durham in 1464-5 (Chambers, II, 244)?

<sup>137</sup> A convenient summary of many of these rites is given in Cumont's *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, ed. Showerman, *passim*, with evidence of the practice of such rites through Europe. The mummers' plays illustrate the vogue in England.

<sup>138</sup> Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, pp. 56, 57, 111-14.

<sup>139</sup> Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, translated by Stallybras, pp. 85 n., 95, 1149, 1318, 1398.

<sup>140</sup> *Ye Story of Inglande* (R. S., I, 77), ll. 2167-70; cf. Layamon's *Brut*, ed. Madden, l. 2878 and note.

games, pageants, and plays that were the product of seasonal festivals. Vitruvius (v. vi) speaks of satyr plays as ornamented with trees, caves, hills, and rustic things. In the eleventh century Papias defines *scaena* as "umbraculum ubi poetae recitabant."<sup>141</sup> From the twelfth century the siege of the castle of maidens can be traced in European pageantry, and it enjoyed an extraordinary popularity that lasted through the Renaissance, especially in England.<sup>142</sup> The castle was also extensively employed in tourneys and court entertainments.<sup>143</sup> A not uncommon feature of civic pageants at London and elsewhere was the tower. In London, for instance, a tower was used at the coronation of Richard II in 1377, and a number of towers were erected in 1415 on the return of Henry V from the victory of Agincourt.<sup>144</sup> A castle and a group of towers were carried at London in the elaborate midnight procession of 1521 on the Eves of St. John and St. Peter,<sup>145</sup> and in 1534 the London ironmongers used a castle in their midsummer show.<sup>146</sup> Early in the eighteenth century castles were built for use in connection with contests of shepherds in Scotland.<sup>147</sup> These scattered bits of evidence are cited merely to lend color to the theory that the castle or tent in the field at English church festivals was used for games or plays as well as for feretories or feasts and represents a stage in the development of drama of which the records have largely disappeared.<sup>148</sup> Certainly out of medieval customs a theatre in the fields survived till the Renaissance. A great central stage represented by a castle is found in our earliest morality,<sup>149</sup> *The Castle of Perseverance*. Playing fields are known to have ex-

<sup>141</sup> Jacobsen, *La Comedie en France au Moyen-Age*, pp. 102-3.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Brotanek, *Die engl. Maskenspiele*, pp. 26-27, 325-26. Cf. *Archaeologia*, xxxi, 103, for a tapestry at the court of Edward III about 1349 that represented the siege: "de insultu dominabus unius castri."

<sup>143</sup> Cf. *Modern Philology*, xiv, 468-77; Ellison, *The Early Romantic Drama at the English Court*, Chap. I.

<sup>144</sup> Chambers, II, 167-73.

<sup>145</sup> *Cal. State Papers, Ven.*, 1520-26, pp. 136-37.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Nicholl, *Some Account of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers*, App. x, pp. xv-xvi, cited in Withington, *English Pageantry*, p. 41.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. *Popular Superstitions*, Gentleman's Magazine Library, p. 67.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Chambers, II, 84, for the Castle of Emmaus in early liturgical drama.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Furnivall and Pollard, *The Macro Plays*, E. E. T. S., E. S., No. xci, pp. xxvii-xxviii, xxxiii-xxxv, 76.

isted in many parts of England and Scotland during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and Carew in 1602 describes miracle plays in Cornwall as performed in the open field on a central stage.<sup>150</sup>

The process of the transference of mysteries and miracles from the church to the places where the folk games were celebrated—cemeteries, village greens, and fields—is very obscure. It was completed relatively early throughout Europe. That it was accompanied in England by contamination with folk games is to my mind indicated by allusions during the wave of reformation in the thirteenth century. In 1207 Innocent III issued a decree in which he complained that *ludi theatrales* were held in churches, and *monstra larvarum* introduced into churches “ad ludibriorum spectacula.”<sup>151</sup> In England near the end of the century, William of Waddington wrote of the abuses of the miracle apparently with this decree in mind.<sup>152</sup> Foolish clerks, he says, have contrived a manifest folly called “miracles.” Visors are used to disguise the faces, a thing which is prohibited in the decree. He excepts from the forbidden miracles the play of the sepulchre and of the resurrection when performed in connection with the service of the church, but he condemns performances in streets of the cities and in cemeteries

<sup>150</sup> Cf. Chambers, II, 338, for a saint's play in a “croft” at Basingbourne in 1511; p. 347 for the use of a “pightell,” or enclosure, at Chelmsford in 1562 and 1563; p. 390 for the “Guary” miracle in Cornwall cited above; p. 394 for the use of a quarry outside Shrewsbury in 1495, 1516, 1533, etc.; Kerry, *Hist. of the Municipal Church of St. Lawrence, Reading*, pp. 2, 233-34, for a play in 1507 at the Forbury, a hill outside of Reading; Beveridge, *Culrose and Tulliallan*, II, 281, for the statement that “Perth, Cupor, Sterling, Linlithgow, and other places, had all their play fields”—followed by an argument that these were for stage-plays; *Records of Edinburgh*, Burgh Record Soc., p. 284, for many details of the play field at Edinburgh; *Hist. MSS. Com.*, v, 542, for “Crokhill” at New Romney in 1441-2; *Archaeologia*, XII, 38, for a “Play-field” at Great Tey, Essex, used by the village *lusores*, 1496 and later; etc.

For the Scottish references and for a number of others cited in this paper from published sources, I am indebted to Professor Manly, who has generously allowed me access to his very valuable collection of records of the medieval drama.

<sup>151</sup> This decree was promulgated with reference to a Polish province but was made general by Gregory IX. Cf. Chambers, I, 279, for the decree quoted from Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Ser. Lat.*, CCXV, 1070.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Chambers, II, 100-1, especially p. 100, n. 4, where the passage from Waddington is given along with Robert Manning of Brunne's translation of it in *Handlyng Synne* (ll. 4640-65).

after feasts. St. Isadore's condemnation of *spectacula* is here applied to miracles and plays called bourds or tournaments — such plays

As myracles and bourdys,  
Or tournamentys of grete prys,

according to Robert Manning's translation of Waddington's passage. The suggestion here of a kinship between miracles and the other forms of pastime mentioned seems to be supported by Robert Grosseteste's earlier grouping of *miracula* with *Inductio Maii sive Autumni* and with *scotales*.

At any rate, when the festivals of the church emerge from obscurity they show distinctly a fusion of secular and religious elements. The cult of the saint seems to have sprung up largely as a substitute for that of the god of the local shrine,<sup>153</sup> and the liturgy of the saint led to the early miracle play in connection with the saint's cult.<sup>154</sup> But the process goes still further, for the rites of the church festival are often so similar to pagan rites as to seem modeled on them.<sup>155</sup> The ancient folk worship of wells was met by a church rite for the blessing of the wells.<sup>156</sup> The banners and fere-tories of the saints in church processions correspond to the symbols and images of pagan gods carried in perambulations.<sup>157</sup> The songs of the marchers and the litanies used in the processions are analogous to pagan songs and ritual on such occasions. A notable example of this fusion is seen in St. George. In origin he is probably merely a substitute for a pagan hero or god who fought the daemonic dragon.<sup>158</sup> The usual St. George pageant seems to have been a procession in which a figure of the saint was carried.<sup>159</sup> The fact

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Chambers, I, 97-99, and the references given in his notes; Bertrand, *La Religion des Gaulois*, pp. 22 ff.; etc.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Coffman, *A New Theory Concerning the Origin of the Miracle Play*, pp. 58 ff.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Grendon, *Jour. Amer. Folk-Lore*, xxii, 144 ff., for the Anglo-Saxon mixture of church and pagan rituals.

<sup>156</sup> Chambers, I, 124 and n. 2; Brand, I, 197 ff.

<sup>157</sup> Chambers, I, 118-21.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Frazer, *Magic Art*, II, 155-70; *Dying God*, pp. 78-89, 105-7; *Jour. Folk-Song Soc.*, v, 328-39.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Chambers, I, 222 ff. and *Hist. MSS. Com.*, I, 104, for Norwich; *Antiquary*, vii, 24-26, for Basingbourne; Dyer, *British Popular Customs*, p. 198 for Dublin; *Jour. Brit. Arch. Assn.*, xvi, 320, for a form close to that of the mummers.

that almost universally in the mummers' play a pagan ritual in which the renouveau is enacted coalesces with features of a St. George play supports the view that probably from an early period in the middle ages folk and church pageantry were so closely and so frequently combined in the summer festivals that the folk permanently confused the pagan and the Christian in tradition. The processions in honor of other saints also, especially when they coincide with folk summer feasts, often show resemblances to folk games. The Chester procession appears to have been practically a folk game with a few biblical figures added.<sup>160</sup> At Hull in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Noah's ship figured in what was probably the pagan ship-procession connected with spring fertilization festivals, and the ship-daemon known among the Teutons<sup>161</sup> seems to have survived here as the "ship-child."<sup>162</sup> On July 11, 1540, when John the Baptist was the central figure of a celebration at Maldon,<sup>163</sup> the pageant or play was subordinated to an elaborate summer game. Some of its features were minstrels, a morris dance, and the regular supply of ale. The fifteen hundred "lyveries" and

<sup>160</sup> Chambers, II, 356. Cf. I, 186-87 for other folk games slightly colored by biblical names or ideas.

<sup>161</sup> Golther, *Handbuch der germ. Mythologie*, pp. 123, 144, 145.

<sup>162</sup> Chambers, I, 121; II, 119-20, 370-71.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. A. Clark, "Maldon Records and the Drama," 10 *N. and Q.*, VII, 181-83, 342-43. John the Baptist wore calves' skins. The appearance of Christ as one of the figures suggests that the baptism was enacted. One difficulty in making statements in regard to folk influence lies in the similarity of Christian ritual and story to elements of folk game. Calves' skins were worn also by mummers. The baptism of Christ in the Jordan bears its resemblance to immersing in a stream the images carried in pagan rites. Even when in 1360 Exeter College, Oxford, "paid 8d. for the expenses of our parishioners of West Wyttenham, on the day of the Decollation of St. John the Baptist [Aug. 29], when there was a play" (*Hist. MSS. Com.*, II, 128), there may have been a simulated execution resembling the beheading in the *Revesby Play*. In pageants at Wells, Aug. 20, 1613, the tailors presented "Herod and Herodias, and the daughter of Herodias, who daunced for St. John Baptiste hedd. St. John Baptiste beheaded" (*Jour. Brit. Arch. Assn.*, XVI, 318-21). In some elaborate processional pageants in London for the Eves of St. John and St. Peter, 1521, there were shown on a "pulpit" the Isle of Patmos with St. John the Evangelist and some towers, St. John the Baptist being imprisoned in one. Following this pageant came one with "a stage, on which was Herod at table, with Herodias' daughter, the tumbler, and the executioner who beheaded St. John the Baptist" (*Cal. State Papers, Ven.*, 1520-6, p. 137).

one thousand pins perhaps indicate that an enormous crowd with some symbolic badge went in procession. Records of the Brotherhood of St. John the Baptist at Winchester show that minstrels were hired both for processions and for feasts during the reign of Richard II and Henry IV, and on one occasion at least there was dancing.<sup>164</sup> The examples given here are late for the period of this study, but taken together they may help us to arrive at a conception of the summer festivals of an earlier period. We may at least be sure that the pagan elements in them represent a continuous tradition among the folk.

On the basis of the modern calendar the final seasonal feasts of the folk are those belonging to the autumn or the harvesting season. Grosseteste's thirteenth century reference to the *Inductio Autumni* has already been quoted. A lyric early in the same century, possibly the earliest secular lyric preserved in England, beginning "Mirie it is while sumer ilast,"<sup>165</sup> might well be a song for the induction of autumn, appropriate for singing at scotales or harvest suppers, to judge from the line "Ei, ei, what this nicht is long!" But inductions and songs of the type seem to be missing in the almost defunct autumn customs of the modern folk. A thirteenth century record connects the very popular scotales with the harvesting. In the suit of the men of King's Ripton already referred to,<sup>166</sup> the demand is made that when the villains "shall mow that meadow [of Haycroft] the whole township shall have 8 d. from the Abbot's purse for a drinking bout which is called scotale." The autumn king is recorded not infrequently in the fifteenth century.<sup>167</sup> The modern harvest home is a drinking fête with its lord of the feast, its dances, and its occasional dramatic game.<sup>168</sup>

It is probable, I think, that the ritual of spring and that of autumn were closely related and had, in the Europe of pagan times,

<sup>164</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, vi, 599-601.

<sup>165</sup> Chambers and Sidgwick, *Early English Lyrics*, pp. 3, 307, 326.

<sup>166</sup> P. 30 above and note 32.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Chambers, I, 143, n. 6 for some references, particularly to the "Rex Autumnalis" at Bath in 1487, 1490, and 1492; and Hobhouse, *Church-Wardens' Accounts*, pp. xiv, 183 n.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. Brand, II, 16 ff. for harvest customs; and Gutch, *County Folk-Lore*, vol. II (*Concerning the North Riding*), pp. 257-66, for several song-dramas acted at mell suppers. A harvest lord with a morris dance appears in *Women Pleased*, IV, 1.

a direct relation to each other<sup>169</sup> which has not altogether died out of modern folk custom despite the decay of the autumn feast. The use of a complementary spring and autumn ritual is suggested in Grosseteste's decree directed against the *Inductio Maii sive Autumni*. Indirect evidence of a vogue of this dual system is found in the celebration of dual festivals for many saints. The apparent correspondence between pagan cults and saints' cults has already been mentioned. In certain places in England the saint to whom a church was dedicated was honored first in the spring or early summer and again in the autumn. It seems clear that, in such feasts at least, the worship of a deity at a local shrine has been combined with seasonal festival. The fullest early evidence of such a system is to be found in the Durham records. Here a feast of the patron saint, Cuthbert, was held in March and another in September. Performers seem to have been hired regularly for the occasion, and the frequent absence of the lords' names usual in connection with the records of the troupes raises the question whether local players or musicians were not often employed.<sup>170</sup> While the system may have arisen in the Catholic church on the Mediterranean, where the dual seasonal rites had a strong hold, instances of local saints, such as Cuthbert at Durham, hint at a development of the seasonal system with special reference to customs at old pagan shrines.<sup>171</sup>

<sup>169</sup> Usener, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, VII, 297-313, especially 303-6; Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, pp. 54-69.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. Chambers, II, 240 ff. for the records. Payments to performers at the feast of St. Cuthbert are recorded as follows: to *histriones* in March and Sept., 1330-31; to *histriones* (of Newcastle in the second case) on two occasions in 1335-6; to *histriones* in Sept., 1550-1; to four *histriones* (patrons named) in March and merely to *histriones* in Sept., 1355-6; to two players of "the Lord Duke" at one feast in 1364-5; to a "tromptour" and a minstrel in 1368-9; to minstrels in March and in Sept., 1375-6; to minstrels at two feasts in 1394-5. The amounts paid vary from 3s. to 20s. The records in the *Durham Accounts* do not profess to be complete.

<sup>171</sup> A feast of the Nativity of John the Baptist corresponding to Midsummer was celebrated in many places, and a feast of the Decollation (August 29) is not infrequently mentioned. Early in the sixteenth century one festival of St. Peter was celebrated in February and a second at Midsummer at St. Peter's in Cheapside (cf. *Jour. Brit. Arch. Assn.*, XXIV, 266). According to *Popular Superstitions*, Gentleman's Magazine Library, pp. 12-14, St. Edward the Martyr, St. Cuthbert, St. Benedict, and St. Thomas of Canterbury, with feasts falling on March 18, March 20, March 21, and Dec. 29, respectively, were also honored with feasts of their translations on June

As I have tried to show, many customs connected with celebrations at local shrines in pagan times—wells, mounts, woods, and burial places—and with the worship of local deities were absorbed into the seasonal feast, probably because the ritual of local deities often had a seasonal meaning. But that independent rituals and festival days existed for local shrines is to be inferred not only from the modern folk-games attached to certain localities but 1) from the development of games in connection with the cemeteries, or sacred groves, especially on the dedication day of the local church, and 2) from the survival in the middle ages of non-seasonal festivals at wells and on hills apparently not hallowed by the presence of a church edifice.

While ecclesiastical foundations by the beginning of the middle ages had claimed in large part the allegiance of the folk granted earlier to pagan shrines and local gods, long after 1200 the church was still attempting to purify itself of pagan customs now connected with the church edifices and the cemeteries. The decree of Gregory in 601 that the people should build their arbors and hold their feasts in the space around the churches probably established the cemetery as the "sacred place" of the folk and finally as their general meeting place. It is clear from the denunciations of the church fathers that at the beginning of the thirteenth century the cemeteries were the sites for the common halls, and the regular places for trials, ordeals, and town meetings, as well as for the games of the folk. The church met the situation by a systematic series of decrees claiming the cemeteries as church property, ordering the demolition of houses in them, and forbidding the townsmen to hold meetings and trials, or to conduct markets or games there. But the conflict between the church and the people was not merely a feudal struggle to wrest the cemeteries from the people; it was also an ecclesiastical struggle to check pagan survivals. In practically all these decrees the *ludi* of the folk in cemeteries and sacred places are specifically prohibited, the terms *choreae*, *luctae*, and *ludi inhonesti* being repeatedly used.<sup>172</sup>

20, Sept. 4, July 11, and July 7, respectively. Cf. 6 *N. and Q.*, vi, 249, for an autumn celebration of the dedication day of St. George in London. No doubt these records of dual feasts in England could be greatly extended.

<sup>172</sup> For the struggle of the citizens of London against the enclosures at St. Paul's in 1321-2, cf. Riley, *Liber Custumarum* (R. S.), pp. 338-427. A large proportion of the bodies of ecclesiastical rules collected in Wilkins'



One of the earliest and at the same time one of the most interesting accounts of folk games about the church is given by Giraldus Cambrensis<sup>173</sup> (ca. 1188), who has described an elaborate ritual dance with mimesis as enacted in the church and cemetery of St. Elined in Wales. A procession around the cemetery with song and prostrations to the earth was followed by vigorous imitations of the action of laborers—driving the oxen to the plow, shoemaking, spinning, etc. This may have been a fertilization rite with prayer either to the god of the shrine or to the dead ancestors of the people to grant success to the various labors of the participants. At any rate, the ceremony is clearly pagan.

The pagan nature of the games denounced by medieval churchmen is most strongly emphasized in connection with their use at the feast of the dedication of the church, and here any traditional rituals for the worship of local deities that might survive along with Christian practices would have their strongest hold.<sup>174</sup> Bishop Chanteloup in 1240 speaks of the *ludi* of the people in cemeteries and sacred places as especially impious "in sanctorum vigiliis et festis ecclesiarum."<sup>175</sup> In an Exeter synod of 1287 the spectacular

*Concilia* for this period reveal at least some of the details summarized above. See, for example, I, 600, Constitutions of Richard Poore, Bishop of Salisbury, 1223; pp. 611, 617, 618, Provincial Council of Scotland, ca. 1225; pp. 623, 625, Constitutions of William of Bleys, 1229; p. 628, "Inquisitiones per archidiaconatus episcopatus Lincoln.," 1230; p. 662, Constit. Synod., 1237; p. 666, Constitutions of Walter de Chanteloup, 1240; p. 734, Stat. Synod. of Bishops of Norwich, 1257 (in addition to a denunciation of *ludi* and *luctae*, there is the passage, "nec mulieres choreas, luxuriosa carmina canendo, lascive ducere praesumant"); II, 140, Synod of Exeter, 1287; p. 281, Constitution of Robert of Winchelsey, 1305; p. 295, "Constitutiones synodales per Henricum Woodlake, Winton. episcopum," ca. 1308 ("in ipsis [coemeteriis], in sanctorum festivitibus, aut aliis luctae non fiant, aut choreae ducantur, vel alii ludi spectabiles habeantur").

<sup>173</sup> *Itinerarium Kambriae*, I, 2 in *Opera* (R. S.), VI, 32-33 (Chambers, I, 189).

<sup>174</sup> The traditions in regard to the saints, the connection of their names with stones and wells, especially in the neighborhood of churches dedicated to them, etc., reveal the fact that saints were often only substituted for daemones of particular localities. See the references of notes 137 and 139; Hope, *Holy Wells*; Mackinlay, *Folklore of Scottish Lochs and Springs*; *Scott. Hist. Rev.*, VI, 260 ff.; *Folk-Lore*, XXVII, 271 ff.; etc.

<sup>175</sup> Wilkins, I, 666.

side of the wakes is stressed.<sup>176</sup> A London decree of the early thirteenth century is especially detailed, forbidding *ludi* and *luctae* in the cemeteries or the *atria* of the churches and condemning specifically the lascivious *choreae* of the women to the accompaniment of song.<sup>177</sup> At the opening of the next century Bishop Baldock of London made a strong attack on the misuse of sacred places. In 1308 he sent out a pastoral letter with especial reference to the church of Barking, where abuses had developed particularly in connection with the feasts of St. Margaret and St. Adelburg. He warns his flock against *luctae*, *choreae*, and lascivious gatherings in churches or cemeteries. In 1311, a letter of similar purport by Baldock forbids also the misuse of the churches and cemeteries in the obsequies of the dead and the festivals of the church.<sup>178</sup> Games

<sup>176</sup> Wilkins, II, 140: "ne quisquam luctas, choreas, vel alios ludos inhonestos in coemeteriis exercere praesumat; praecipue in vigiliis, et [in] festis sanctorum, cum hujusmodi ludos theatrales et ludibriorum spectacula introductos, per quos ecclesiarum coinquinatur honestas, sacri ordines detestantur."

<sup>177</sup> Constitutions of the Diocese of London, ca. 1215-22, published by C. M. Woolley, *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xxx, 297-99: An order for enclosing the cemeteries commands that "omnes ludi et placita secularia a locis sacris penitus arceantur"; and in regard to *ludi*, "inhibemus ne in cymiteriis vel atriis ecclesiarum ludi uel lucte fiant, nec mulieres ibi coreas luxuriosas carmina canendo late dulcedine presumant, cum ex hiis Domini reuerencia et sanctorum honore contemptis, rixe et contenciones soleant euenire. Ne laicorum edificia in cimiteriis fiant," etc.

<sup>178</sup> *Registrum Radulphi Baldock*, etc., Cant. and York Soc., p. 73. In places dedicated to Christ "omnes actus ad convicia et tumultus seu pollutiones inductivi penitus conquiescant. Sane ex insinuacione clamosa et fama ac facti notarietate recepimus quod in ecclesiis conventuali et parochiali de Berkynges et in cimiterio ipsarum ecclesiarum sunt plerumque communes lacivie, coree, lucte et alie conventicule voluptuose." On account of quarrels, homicides, etc. the Bishop commands "in dictis ecclesiis conventuali ac parochiali de Berkynges necnon et in aliis ecclesiis circumquaque comitivis in decanato de Berkynges singulis annis per aliquos dies dominicos vel sollempnes prope et ante festa sancte Margarete et sancte Adelburge virginum, in quarum festivitibus talia didicimus enormia frequencius perpetrata fuisse, moneatis in genere ac pupplice inhibeatis ne quis ad dictas ecclesias vel cimiterium aliquoliter accedens luctas, coreas vel lacivia alia . . . edicat." On pp. 145-46 occurs the order of 1311 renewing the prohibition and applying it to the diocese and to games of which he has heard, "in quibusdam ecclesiis et cimiteriis . . . tum in ipsorum ecclesiarum festivitibus, tum in mortuorum ibidem delatorum exequiis et aliis temporibus," etc. At the same time Baldock sent out an

at the vigils of the saints and of the dead are forbidden in the Constitutions of John Thoresby, Archbishop of York, in 1367.<sup>179</sup> "In the begynning of holy Chirche," says an old homilist, "it was so that the pepul cam to the chirche with candellys brennyng, and wold wake and coome with light toward to the chirche in their devociions; and after they fell to lecherie and songs, daunces, harping, piping, and also to glotony and sinne, and so turned the holynesse to cursydnees."<sup>180</sup> A computus of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, mentions *histriones* at the church wake in 1388-9.<sup>181</sup> This may have been the occasion for an actual dramatic performance, for plays, especially miracles, were probably not uncommon at these medieval feasts, though not till the early sixteenth century are they unmistakably recorded.<sup>182</sup>

Further evidence for the persistence of the local pagan cult is perhaps to be found in the occasional indications of folk celebrations independent of church festivals. Near the middle of the thirteenth century Chanteloup ordered the priests of his diocese to preach against the observance of other seasons than those established by the church.<sup>183</sup> Well worship, which played an important part in Anglo-Saxon custom, and continued to be a prominent fea-

order against wizards and enchanter (pp. 144-45), very detailed in its picture of their practices.

<sup>179</sup> Wilkins, III, 68; quoted in note 207. Cf. also *Wykeham's Register*, Hampshire Record Society, II, 410 (Chambers, I, 92), for a Winchester decree of 1384 forbidding "clerici et laici . . . ad pilas ludere, jactaciones lapidum facere . . . coreas facere dissolutas, et interdum canere cantilenas, ludibriorum spectacula facere, saltaciones et alios ludos inhonestos frequentare, ac multas alias insolencias perpetrare, ex quibus cimeterii huiusmodi execratio seu pollucio frequencius verisimiliter formidetur."

<sup>180</sup> Brand, II, 1.

<sup>181</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, I, 81: "Item, de xviii d. datis histrionibus in Festo Dedicationis Ecclesie."

<sup>182</sup> Cf. *Modern Philology*, XIV, 480-81.

<sup>183</sup> Wilkins, I, 668-69: "Sacerdotes etiam praedicent parochianis suis, quod, contra doctrinam apostoli, non observent dies, et menses, et tempora, et annos, nec in actibus aliis, nec in matrimoniis celebrandis." Cf. *Registrum Johannis de Pontissara, Episcopi Wyntoniensis*, Cant. and York Soc., Constitutions of 1295 (cf. p. 207 for Constitutions of Woodloke in volume II of Wilkins as a reissue of these), p. 238: "Sed nec lapides, ligna, arbores sive fontes propter somnium aliquod venerentur ut sancta." Here the incursion of pure paganism into church ceremony is suggested.

ture of the summer festivals of the folk, as appears from decrees already cited, was ordinarily neutralized by the church ritual for blessing the wells, particularly in connection with Easter.<sup>184</sup> But folk gatherings for well worship were in vogue at certain wells. To the efforts of Bishop Chanteloup at sweeping reformation we are once more indebted for an early picture of pagan practices. He not only prohibits well worship but specifies certain places in his diocese where the people gather to the jeopardy of their souls.<sup>185</sup> In 1385, because the people of Bisham began to worship at a new well and to place offerings in a bird's nest in a tree on the border of the well, Bishop Erghum ordered that the tree be uprooted and the well filled in.<sup>186</sup> Robert Mascall, Bishop of Hereford, in 1410 prohibited the flocking of the people to a stone and well in the parish of Turnastone to worship on bent knees and to offer gifts.<sup>187</sup> The Durham Halmote Rolls record what seems to have been a pure folk game associated with a particular spot. In an inquisition of 1364 about encroachments on a moor, it is stated that the shepherds of Usseworth and Heworth had been accustomed to come with their stock to the lower part of a place called the Blackletch, and there to play in turn.<sup>188</sup> Their *ludus* may well have been such a contest as the shepherds' contests recorded for Scotland in the eighteenth century.<sup>189</sup>

The great events in the life of the individual also—birth, marriage, death—remained occasions for festival practices that were usually pagan in origin. Records of the celebration of birth are few,

<sup>184</sup> Cf. Chambers, I, 142, n. 2.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. Wilkins, I, 669. Chanteloup lays a ban upon "superstitiosas etiam fontium adorationes, et populorum collectiones apud Cerney et apud fontem Rollae, juxta Gloverniam, et in aliis locis similibus."

<sup>186</sup> *Victoria History of Berkshire*, II, 14.

<sup>187</sup> *Registrum Roberti Mascall, Episcopi Herefordensis*, Cant. and York Soc., pp. 74-75.

<sup>188</sup> *Halmota Prioratus Dunelmensis*, Surtees Soc., p. 31: "tenentes de Magn' Wsseworth' nuncquam intraverunt in morā de Wardelay ante ultimum tempus quod Scoti combusserunt villatas de Heworths, scilicet quod pastores de Wsseworth et Heworthe solebant venire cum averiis suis usque ad quemdam locum vocatum le Blakletch'm ad inferiorem partem ejusdem et ibi se . . . invicem ludere scilicet post combustionem prædictam viz. per lapsum xl annorum per vices ten' de Magna Usseworth . . . pro eo quod villat' de Heworth diu vasta existebant." The gaps apparently occur in the MS.

<sup>189</sup> *Popular Superstitions*, Gentleman's Mag. Library, pp. 66-68.

however, and the festival has not been important in the development of folk drama. The preparation of a table to propitiate the *fata* or *matres* at the birth of a child is mentioned by Bishop Iscanus in the twelfth century.<sup>190</sup> At the end of the next century Waddington and Robert Manning of Brunne refer to the worship of these goddesses, and at the opening of the fifteenth century Pecock condemns the same practice.<sup>191</sup> Scant as the evidence is, it may be said that games pretty clearly developed with the rites associated with birth. In the *Chronicle of Lanercost*, 1285, it is related that the Scottish queen "contrived to have the son of a play-actor to be brought [to her] so that it might pass for hers; and when as many as collected to dance by license [in honour of] so important an accouchement had come to Stirling," etc.<sup>192</sup> We may have here a reflection of a pagan custom. There were festivities on several occasions within a few weeks in honor of the birth of a son to Edward II in 1312. The dancing of carols and a procession with torches and minstrelsy marked the celebration of the city fathers who had assembled at the Guildhall. A week later the whole city honored the event with a mass at St. Paul's followed by dancing of carols in the church. Still later, after a procession of city officials and certain guilds to Westminster, there were "carols throughout the City all the rest of the day, and great part of the night." The pilgrimage of the queen to Canterbury after her accouchement was celebrated by the fishmongers.<sup>193</sup> Bits of evidence for birth festivals among the folk are late, but, as they have attracted little notice, it is perhaps worth while to call attention to the former vogue<sup>194</sup> of a custom now obsolete, especially since

<sup>190</sup> Cf. Wright and Halliwell, *Reliquiae Antiquae*, I, 285, for the Penitential of Iscanus, 1161-86: "Qui mensam preparavit cum tribus cultellis in famulatum personarum, ut ibi nascentibus bona prædestinent."

<sup>191</sup> *Handlyng Synne*, ed. Furnivall, Roxburghe Club, II, 571 ff. The passage from *Repressor* (R. S., I, 155) is quoted by Furnivall on p. XLVII, n. b. All three passages refer to the "three sisters" who shape the destiny of the newborn, but they omit any mention of setting tables.

<sup>192</sup> Translated in *Scottish Hist. Review*, VI, 281.

<sup>193</sup> Riley, *Memorials of London*, pp. 105-7.

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Ben Jonson's *Works*, ed. Gifford-Cunningham, III, 461-64, for a birth "Interlude"—supposedly written on the occasion of the christening of a son of the Earl of Newcastle—interesting features of which are a brief speech introducing a feast, a long dialogue with coarse raillery of the midwife and the nurses, a poetic calculation of the nativity of the

Anglo-Saxon decrees already cited seem to be directed against the observance of superstitious birth rites in England at an early period.

Games, feasts, and merrymaking belong to the folk marriage the world over, and orders of the English bishops from 1200 on, as well as in the Anglo-Saxon period, indicate the difficulty met in substituting the church marriage for the betrothal and marriage of the folk. About 1223 the Constitutions of Richard Poore enjoin that marriages be celebrated reverently and not with laughter and sport or in taverns or at public potations or feasts.<sup>195</sup> It is in this passage that marriages with rush rings are forbidden. Constitutions of about 1215-22 for the diocese of London contain the same passages except that reference to marriage with a rush ring is omitted.<sup>196</sup> In much the same language ecclesiastics continue the attack on the revelry of the folk bridal.<sup>197</sup> Suggestions of more

child, and three songs. Nicholas Assheton's *Journal* (Chetham Soc.) shows the survival of merrymaking among the gentry of Lancashire in connection with birth. On Feb. 20, 1617-8, after the birth of his child he records, "Some wyves of Clitheroe heer this day. Fooled this day worse"; and on March 4, "My Cooz. Assheton's wyffe came a presenting, verie merrie" (pp. 83-84). Cf. the note on pp. 21-22 giving records of such "sports" in 1709. An account secured by Joseph Hunter (Notes on Brand, 1810, II, 12, Brit. Mus. Add. ms. 24,545) indicates the survival of christening sports among the common people of the north of England at the opening of the nineteenth century. After a lengthy meal, sometimes two of those present danced the "Cobblers Jigg." Sometimes the "Winshire dance" was tried. "That and fairly shot on her, with the old folks is the last tune they dance. The young folks dance to 'I'll hae a wife o' my own an I'll be beholden to ne' body,' or I'll niver leave the Laddie."

<sup>195</sup> Jones and Macray, *Charters and Documents of Salisbury* (R. S.), p. 154 (Wilkins, I, 581, for Durham): "præcipimus quod matrimonia cum honore celebrentur et reverentia, non cum risu vel joco, non in tabernis, potationibus publicis, seu commensationibus. Nec quisquam annulum de junco, vel quacunque alia vili materia, vel pretiosa, jocando manibus innecat muliercularum, ut liberius cum eis fornicetur, ne dum jocari se putat oneribus matrimonialibus se abstringat."

<sup>196</sup> *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, XXXI, 294-95. Not only these constitutions but Poore's and others forbid *sortilegia* and *malificia* at nuptials. Woolley, who edits the London Constitutions, conjectures that that document and the Constitutions of Poore have a common source (p. 286).

<sup>197</sup> Cf. Wilkins, I, 595, Provincial Council of Oxford, 1222 (marriage should be celebrated "cum honore et reverentia de die et in facie ecclesiae, non cum risu et joco, nec sic derisui et despectui"); II, 135, Synod of Exeter, 1287 (phrases "in tabernis," etc. repeated); and II, 513, Provincial Council at Oxford, 1312 (the prohibition of 1222 virtually repeated).

dramatic sports appear, however. In 1221 the common people of Dunstable were warned that as they went to the altar or came from it at marriages, churchings, or other rites for the living or the dead, they were not to bestow their offering on *histriones* or the poor.<sup>198</sup> Here all the rites which we have discussed in connection with the life of the individual are included. Some conception of the passion of the folk for sports and revelry in the thirteenth century is indicated in an effort of Richard de Swinfield, Bishop of Hereford, to check the participation of Christians in revelry of the Jews. On August 26, 1286, he ordered that his clerics publicly forbid Christians to take part in *convivia* of the Jews of Hereford, who were preparing "*quedam nupcialia communia secundum ritum suum detestabilem*," for the Wednesday after the feast of St. Bartholomew. On September 6, Swinfield sent out another pastoral letter calling for the punishment of those Christians who had taken part in the marriage celebration in any way—the terms *ludendo*, *joculando*, and *quodcumque ystrionatus officium exercendo* are used—and of those who had furnished the Jews with equipages, silk or brocaded garments, etc.<sup>199</sup> At court marriages, formal feasts with plays were popular early, and marriages among the middle classes were perhaps frequently celebrated in the same way. In France as early as 1280 "spectacles" of weddings and stages are grouped in a prohibition,<sup>200</sup> but so far as I know the first record in England that suggests a play at a wedding outside of the courtly classes is for Shrewsbury in 1409, when a payment was made to players "in honorem villae" at the marriage of a cousin of one David Holbache.<sup>201</sup> Chaucer probably reflects the usual festivities of his time.

<sup>198</sup> Bateson, *Borough Customs*, II, 208-9: "In nupciis autem et purificationibus et aliis oblationibus que pro vivis ac defunctis fieri solent . . . Nec euntes ad altare nec inde redeuntes oblacionem suam hystrionibus vel pauperibus erogabunt."

<sup>199</sup> *Registrum Ricardi de Swinfield*, Cant. and York Soc., pp. 120-1 (cf. *Archiv*, CXXIII, 154-55). He orders penalties imposed upon "omnes illos qui predictis connubiis intererant comedendo, bibendo, ludendo, joculando, seu quodcumque ystrionatus officium exercendo, seu quocumque alio modo eisdem ad honorem ipsorum communicando," and upon "illos vero qui prefatis inimicis Christi communicarunt, eos in equitatu, vectura, ornamentis, in pannis sericis seu deauratis ornarunt, seu eciam honorarunt."

<sup>200</sup> Warton, *History of Poetry* (1824), II, 79: "Nullus spectaculis aliquibus quae aut in *Nuptiis* aut in *Scenis* exhibentur, intersit."

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Chambers, II, 250.

"At every brydale" the prentice Perkin of the *Cokes Tale* would "singe and hoppe," and the Wife of Bath, taking advantage of her husband's absence, made "visitaciouns" to "pleyes of miracles and mariages."<sup>202</sup>

The prohibitions of the Anglo-Saxon period against pastimes at vigils for the dead are frequently repeated during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A Scottish council of about 1225 forbids *cantus* and *choreae* at funerals.<sup>203</sup> The Constitutions of Bishop Bleys, 1229, condemn *cantilenae*, *choreae*, and *luctae* "quamdiu corpora defunctorum in domibus jacent."<sup>204</sup> In 1284 a Ludlow guild, while countenancing the common night watches for the dead, prohibits the use of games and the presence of any women except those of the family.<sup>205</sup> A London council of 1342 decries the assemblies at wakes for the dead on account of the evils of fornication and theft which result.<sup>206</sup> In 1367 Thoresby, Archbishop of York, in a general attack on the games includes the *ludi* of funeral occasions.<sup>207</sup> These records, like those of the birth festival, go to show how much more elaborate was the system of folk games in the middle ages than in modern times.<sup>208</sup>

<sup>202</sup> *Canterbury Tales*, Wife of Bath's Prologue, l. 558.

<sup>203</sup> Wilkins, I, 617: "Item ad funera et exequias mortuorum laicorum cantus vel choreas fieri prohibemus, cum non deceat de aliorum fletu ridere, sed ibidem potius de hujusmodi sit dolere."

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 625. Chanteloup in 1240 attacks the same pastimes at wakes, confessedly repeating the injunctions of his "predecessor" (p. 675).

<sup>205</sup> Cf. Toulmin Smith, *English Gilds*, E. E. T. S., No. 40, p. 194. The passage in regard to games is as follows: "nec monstra larvarum inducere, nec corporis vel fame sue ludibria, nec ludos *alios* inhonestos, presumat aliquantulum attemptare." The first expression (translated by Smith to 'call up ghosts') occurs in a French decree (*Marten. Thesaur. Anecd.*, IV, 993) quoted by Warton, *History of Eng. Poetry* (1824), II, 73. Cf. Chambers, I, 82 and n. 4.

<sup>206</sup> Wilkins, II, 707.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 68, 1367: "Et quia saepe contingit, quod quidam in sanctorum vigiliis conveniunt in ecclesiis, qui divinis ibidem deberent vacare obsequiis, vel in exequiis defunctorum pro animabus defunctorum hujusmodi oraturi, qui versi in sensum reprobum ludis noxiis, et vanitatibus, et quandoque pejoribus frequenter intendunt . . . et in defunctorum exequiis, de domo luctus et orationis, domum risus faciunt et excessus . . . districtius inhihemus, ne aliqui venientes ad hujusmodi vigilias, et exequias, praesertim in ecclesiis hujusmodi ludos aut turpitudines, vel alia in errorem, vel peccatum ducentia faciant, vel exercent quovis modo."

<sup>208</sup> Aubrey mentions "mimicall plays" in like-wakes in England during



To judge from the records of the middle ages, the vigil, or wake, whether at the church feast or at the burial of the dead, stood as high in the favor of the folk as did summer games. In the thirteenth century *Fleta*, among the rules for the officials of great lords was one requiring the seneschal to find out whether tenants neglected "duties to haunt taverns and wakes by night," and another requiring the reeve not to "suffer any servant of the manor to hold by night or by day, fairs, markets or disseissins, nor to haunt wakes or taverns."<sup>209</sup> Some of the decrees against wakes suggest that whatever the occasion the games were essentially similar. Grosse-teste in 1236 condemns *ludi* in vigils of the saints and of the dead.<sup>210</sup> In 1311 Baldock groups games at the festivals of the church and at the exequies of the dead, and half a century later Thoresby seems to imply that the *ludi* of the folk were much the

the seventeenth century (*Remains*, F. L. S., p. 30). Sports at wakes survived in Ireland until the nineteenth century. They are described by J. G. A. Prim, "Customs and Games at Wakes," *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archæological Soc.*, II, 333-34, and by Wood-Martin, *Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland*, I, 314-21, 386-87. A leader or captain called "Borekeen" presided, with subordinate officers in fantastic habits. Some of the games were so obscene that they are not described. Such are "Bout," usually performed first and by men and women together, and the "Cow and the Bull." "Building the Ship"—compared by Prim with Indian "Big Canoe"—was a long mimetic action with obscene rites. "In launching or drawing the ship out of the mud," men performed naked in the presence of women. In one game women in men's clothes "conducted themselves in a very strange fashion." Other games were "Hold the Light," in which a man was blindfolded and flogged, "Turning the Spit," "Selling the Pig," "Horse Fair" (cf. Clare, *The Village Minstrel* [1821], pp. xxi-xxxv, and Sandys, *Christmas Carols*, pp. cxii-cxiii, for some English games probably related to the foregoing as described by Wood-Martin), "Brogue about" (a form of "Hunt the Slipper"), and "Droghedy." The last, said here to be obscene, is a dance akin to the morris, and well known (cf. Kennedy, *Banks of the Boro*, p. 231; *Folk-Lore*, v, 190-91; O'Keefe and O'Brien, *Handbook of Irish Dances*, p. 114; for an obscene dance, like this employing sticks, and possibly related, cf. 8 *N. and Q.*, x, 26-27, 100-1). The "mock marriage" is a common feature of folk festivals in Europe and especially of their most important detritus, the singing games of children. Finally, "Building the Fort" was a performance with action much like that of the mummers' plays.

<sup>209</sup> Translated by Coulton, *Social Life in Britain*, pp. 302 and 304, from the edition of John Selden, 1647, pp. 159 and 164.

<sup>210</sup> *Epistolæ* (R. S.), p. 74.

same in like-wakes, in church services for the dead, and in the vigils of the saints.<sup>211</sup> The term wake was comprehensive enough to cover the night celebration of Midsummer and even the night banquets and ales of fraternities and parish churches in their observance of church festivals. If the records cited here and the customs of the folk later furnish a basis for inference, we may assume that the public processions and pageants of all great festivals ended in evening feasts, which were accompanied with the *ludi* and *choreae* of the folk.

An even more comprehensive term than wake is ale. Whether Christian or pagan, seasonal or sacramental, the characteristic feast of the folk from Easter to autumn seems to have been the ale. The marriage feast has acquired the fixed name of bridal. The summer feast, particularly that of Whitsun, is often called an ale—a Whitsun ale, a king ale, a play ale, or even a Robin Hood ale.<sup>212</sup> Bid ales, hock ales, church ales, etc. are recorded.<sup>213</sup> A modern term, applied especially to the feast of the summer king, is lamb ale. The name is derived from the lamb which was supplied by the lord of the manor for the various feasts of the medieval folk, and which was probably a relic of old sacrificial customs.<sup>214</sup> The provision of

<sup>211</sup> For Baldock see note 178 above; for Thoresby see note 207.

<sup>212</sup> Cf. Hobhouse, *Church-Wardens' Accounts*, p. 200, for a Robin Hood ale at Tintinhull in 1512-3.

<sup>213</sup> Cf. Chambers, I, 179; Brand, I, 276 ff.; Hampson, *Medii Aevi Calendarium*, pp. 282-88. Many of the terms have died out. Cf. "Stodell Kyldirkyne ale," on May 26, 1447, at St. Peter Cheap, London (*Jour. Brit. Arch. Assn.*, XXIV, 266); and "Felesonunshale" early in the fourteenth century (Riley, *Liber Custumarum*, p. 351).

<sup>214</sup> Chambers, I, 143-45, has collected a number of records of survivals of old Saxon sacrificial customs. In I *N. and Q.*, VII, 353, an account is given of a struggle on May Day in modern times for slices of a ram roasted whole with the skin and wool on, at Holne in Devonshire. The lamb ale of Kidlington in Oxfordshire was described by Blount in 1679 in *Ancient Tenures*, and a lamb ale at the neighboring Kirtlington in modern times has been described by Manning (for both see *Folk-Lore*, VIII, 313-16). In Blount's day the girl who with her thumbs tied behind her back caught the lamb with her teeth, was proclaimed Lady of the Lamb (cf. Coulton, *Medieval Garner*, p. 121, for the catching of a greased pig by old women in France early in the thirteenth century). The lamb was cooked with the skin on. Morris dances and a feast on the green were features of the occasion. The modern festival at Kirtlington was celebrated with a lord and lady, a procession, a lamb, a fool, and morris dancers. A bower of green

a festal lamb has been mentioned for Easter and Midsummer,<sup>215</sup> but the practice was common in feasts.<sup>216</sup> Early prohibitions against ram-raising probably reflect such a custom.<sup>217</sup> The ale most frequently recorded in medieval England was the scotale. Proclamation of scotales is expressly forbidden by constitutions and synods in language which suggests that banns were common for scotales as for the later games or plays.<sup>218</sup> A prohibition of Bishop Poore about 1223<sup>219</sup> reveals the fact that the almost ritualistic drinking customs prevalent in the sixteenth century by which one devotee of Bacchus might be called on to do another "right" and

bought on the village green was the scene of the feasts on a number of successive evenings beginning with the Monday after Trinity Sunday. After three days on which the procession took place at Kirtlington, the game went to neighboring villages, returning for a feast at night.

<sup>215</sup> Cf. notes 72 and 121 above for the records.

<sup>216</sup> Cf. *Law Magazine and Law Review*, xiv, 343-50, for accounts of the medieval harvesting and of feasts provided for reapers and sheep-shearers. Among other things a ram or a lamb for the feast was common. Thus in 1222 it was the custom in Wickham, Essex, for the mowers to have "a cheese and a good ram" in common. Mowers and haymakers of Borley in 1308 could claim two bushels of wheat, a wether, a gallon of butter, the "second best cheese out of the lord's dairy," salt and oatmeal, and the morning's milk of all the cows. In 1279 at Swincombe, in Oxfordshire, each of the sheep-shearers had a loaf and a half in place of the lamb.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. Grosseteste, *Epistolae*, pp. 74, 162 for orders of 1236 and 1238 (?); and Wilkins, I, 628, "Inquisitiones per archidiaconatus episc. Lincoln.," 1230; p. 673, Constitutions of Walter de Chanteloup, 1240; p. 707, Constitutions of Walter de Kirkham, ca. 1255; III, 61, Synod of Ely, 1364; etc.

<sup>218</sup> Wilkins, I, 600, Constitutions of Richard Poore, 1223: "Prohibemus quoque ne denunciations scotallorum fiant in ecclesia per laicos, nec in ecclesiis, nec extra ecclesias per sacerdotes, vel per clericos." Cf. p. 574, Council of Durham, ca. 1225; p. 636, Constitutions of Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, ca. 1236; p. 662, Constitutiones Synodales, ca. 1237, for the same decree with some variation in wording. For injunctions against the attendance of the clergy at scotales, cf. Wilkins, I, 530, 624, 628, 642, 707, 719. For other references cf. Chambers, I, 91-92, 179, and Du Cange and *N. E. D.* under *scotallum* or *scotale*.

<sup>219</sup> Jones and Macray, *Charters and Documents of Salisbury*, p. 134: "Illud abusum clericis penitus interdicimus quo ad potus aequales sumendos se obligant potatores, et ille iudicio talium plus laudatur qui plures inebriat et calices fecundiores exhaurit. Unde interdicimus quod nullus alium cogat ad bibendum." This passage is re-issued in the Council of Durham (Wilkins, I, 574; cf. n. 87 above) and is repeated verbatim in the Constitutions of Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, about 1236 (Wilkins, I, 635-36).

to drink "super nagulum" <sup>220</sup> were probably in full force in the middle of the thirteenth century. The ales of all kinds were doubtless occasions for folk dances and games. Perhaps drama also had a place in them.

One of the clearest ways in which the extensive vogue of the *ludi* among the English folk before 1400 is seen is in the hold which folk pastimes continued to have on their natural foe the clergy. The anecdote handed down by Giraldus Cambrensis of the priest at the end of the twelfth century who intoned his bit of *cantilena* instead of his *Dominus vobiscum* is well known.<sup>221</sup> According to Grosseteste, the clerics around 1244 made plays called the Induction of May or Autumn. The church voiced in many injunctions its protest against all such impiety. Orders against the presence of the clergy at scotales and drinking bouts have just been cited. Chanteloup forbids the clergy to support games of kings and queens, and specifies that they are not to attend *inhonesti ludi* or *choreae* or to play at dice.<sup>222</sup> In 1289 Gilbert, Bishop of Chichester, begs those having the care of souls to abstain from *illicita spectacula*, duels, tourneys, and *luctae*.<sup>223</sup> Robert of Winchelsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1305 uses the terms *spectacula* and "ludos noxios, vel prohibitos."<sup>224</sup> Along with a great many of these thirteenth and fourteenth century injunctions go warnings also, as in the Anglo-Saxon period, against the clerics' attendance at performances of professional or semi-professional entertainers—*mimi*, *histriones*, *joculatores*, etc.<sup>225</sup>

<sup>220</sup> Cf. Baskervill, *English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedy*, pp. 177-79.

<sup>221</sup> *Gemma Ecclesiastica* I, 43 (*Opera* [R. S.], II, 120), often quoted, as by Chambers and Sidgwick, *Early English Lyrics*, pp. 329-30.

<sup>222</sup> Wilkins, I, 673. *Taxilli* and *aleae* are frequently forbidden to the clergy.

<sup>223</sup> Wilkins, II, 169.

<sup>224</sup> Wilkins, II, 281.

<sup>225</sup> In addition to the passages cited immediately above, cf. Jones and Macray, *Charters and Documents of Salisbury*, p. 134 (or Wilkins, I, 574), Poore's Constitutions, *ca.* 1223; Grosseteste, *Epistolae*, p. 159, Constitutions, *ca.* 1238; and Wilkins, I, 628, Inquisitions of Lincoln, 1230; p. 706, Constitutions of Walter de Kirkham, *ca.* 1255; p. 733, Synodal Statutes of the Bishops of Norwich, 1257; II, 142, Synod of Exeter, 1287; III, 60, Synod of Ely, 1364. The wording of Poore's Constitutions—"mimis, jocularibus, et histrionibus non intendant"—repeats that of the Lateran Council of 1215 (Chambers, I, 39, n. 1) and is practically repeated in most of the pas-

## III

A discussion of the nature and organization of the folk games, except in the most general way, is not within the scope of this paper. It seems clear, however, that the *ludi* of the people are not as a whole to be confused with minstrelsy. Whether the performances at the games of the folk were ever primarily narrative is extremely doubtful, though the narrative art of the medieval minstrel was certainly predominant in the more cultured circles until the time of Chaucer and had not lost its prestige even in the beginning of the sixteenth century—as we may see from the constant employment of the term minstrels for the troupes of the greater nobles<sup>228</sup> and from the enormous influence exerted on the moralities and on folk games by minstrelsy, especially in the form of the disard's speech or the *sermon joyeux*. This is not to claim, of course, that narrative did not enter into the folk game. The folk themselves had a vast store of tales, ballads, and songs that were not dramatic, and the hired minstrel was common at their feasts. But the basis of folk ritual and of the resulting folk games in seasonal festivals and in ceremonies connected with birth, marriage, and death, was action or representation. Such action does not imply drama in the modern sense, for in the genuine ritual, where all the people were actors, there could be no interest in a technique of representation called for by an audience. From first to last, however, it is possible to trace in the games the successive stages of a development toward the dramatic in action and in speech. Some forms of folk game show mere mimesis. A greater number have dance action suited to the words of ritual songs. In an advanced type, probably common throughout the history of folk song, the effect of dialogue song is

sages cited here. Woolley, *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xxx, 285-87, also calls attention to the influence of the Lateran Council of 1215 on Poore's Constitutions. He considers the whole reforming wave of the early thirteenth century to be due to this Council reinforced by the Provincial Council of Oxford in 1222, and he lists some half score of diocesan constitutions that before the middle of the thirteenth century repeat many of the injunctions of the Lateran Council. For other cases in England, cf. Chambers, I, 39-40.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. the extracts from accounts books given by Chambers, II, 243-51; *Hist. MSS. Com.*, v, 490-96 (Rye MSS.); *ibid.*, *MSS. of the Duke of Rutland*, iv, 270; *ibid.*, *Middleton MSS.*, pp. 328 ff. and 346 ff.

produced when the foresinger is answered by the circle of dancers.<sup>227</sup> During the thirteenth century there is evidence on the Continent for a type of song in which two or more foresingers carry on a dialogue, with the chorus singing the narrative parts.<sup>228</sup> A number of ballads and songs that might have been so used in the choral song and dance of the folk are preserved from the middle ages or survive in tradition with marks of great antiquity.<sup>229</sup> Finally, there are forms into which even a plot interest enters.<sup>230</sup> In the dark ages all these types were probably common in France, and possibly in England. They were almost certainly known in England by the opening of the thirteenth century at the latest.

The evidence on which this assumption is based is very largely cumulative and must be presented in other studies, but its nature will be indicated here. First, a number of forms or conventions of folk games, especially in France, pretty certainly descended in tradition from Roman folk custom. Second, from early in the middle ages some folk games are known in sophisticated forms which must from their very nature be regarded as derived ultimately from pagan ritual but based directly on games that had already assumed virtually a dramatic form as song and dance drama of the folk. Finally, the use of this modified folk drama in cultured groups preceded a still further artificial development of the games in the hands of puits, confreries, and minstrels, notable examples being furnished in France by the plays of Adan de la Hale and in England by the *Interludium de Clerico et Puella* as well as by features of the mystery plays and the moralities. These modifications in turn had so extensive an influence on folk games in festivals that, outside of the few ritual motives which constitute the skeleton of

<sup>227</sup> Cf. *Pub. Mod. Lang. Assn.*, xxvi (1911), 285, for I Samuel xviii and St. Jerome's translation of it and for Apuleius' description of the chorus; G. Paris, *Journal des Savants*, 1892, pp. 155 ff. and 407 ff.; *Flower and the Leaf*, ll. 176-89, 347-53, for the English dance.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. "Jeu de la Chapelet" in Bédier, *Revue des deux Mondes*, Jan. 15, 1906, pp. 402-6.

<sup>229</sup> For older songs, cf. *Cambridge Hist. Eng. Lit.*, II, 424; Bödtker, *Altenglische Dichtungen*, pp. 172-73; *Anglia*, XII, 241, 242, 255, 256; Ritson, *Ancient Songs and Ballads* (ed. Hazlitt), pp. lviii-lix; etc. Some of these and others I have discussed as drama in *Modern Philology*, XIV, 237-39.

<sup>230</sup> For traditional ballads cf. Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Nos. 1, 2, 12, 13, 25, 95, etc. For the use of such ballads as drama, cf. Child, IV, 439; I, 249; II, 354; and *Mod. Phil.*, XIV, 497-502.

the games and the mummers' plays, the folk drama of England and Scotland has followed the more sophisticated forms except in certain children's games. The evidence cited in this paper goes to show, I think, that by the time of Chaucer this extensive transformation of folk ritual had already been practically completed.

That at a relatively early date professional performers should be extensively employed, not as mere musicians, jugglers, and disards, but as actors of farcical games, would be in keeping with the development outlined above. Wandering or low orders of minstrels probably often became players and as they influenced the folk games, took over forms of these games. Altogether, it seems reasonable to suppose that by 1300 there was a certain coalescence of the games of the folk with those of the wandering players. Probably large numbers of the early references to *menestralli*, *histriones*, *mimi*, etc. are to performers of some type of dramatic game. Chambers rightly points out that in the records of the middle ages as a whole the varied terms for entertainers cannot be differentiated sharply,<sup>231</sup> but the very frequent employment of several different terms in the same connection by the same writer or accountant seems to indicate an attempt to distinguish types. Giraldus Cambrensis describes the scene at a meal in the monastery of Canterbury in 1179, when the gathering seemed to him "quasi ad ludos scenicos aut inter histriones et jocolatores."<sup>232</sup> Certainly by the middle of the fourteenth century some of the wandering entertainers were professional actors. Roger de Mortival's reference to those who are called "menestralli" and sometimes in the vulgar speech "ludorum homines" is suggestive though not conclusive.<sup>233</sup> But in a decree of 1348 the Bishop of Hereford not only couples with *ludi* the word *theatrales* (used with increasing frequency in references to the *ludi*

<sup>231</sup> II, 232-33.

<sup>232</sup> *De rebus a se gestis* II, v (*Opera* [R. S.], I, 51).

<sup>233</sup> Chambers, I, 40, n. 1, from Dayman and Jones, *Sarum Statutes*, p. 76. Early in the fourteenth century a penitential ascribed to Thomas de Cabham, in classifying *histriones*, condemns the class who transform their bodies with indecent leaping and postures, presenting themselves stripped or disguised with hideous masks (Chambers, I, 59-60; II, 262-63). Though the tricks of the infamous *scurrae* may be here described, the details would apply to certain forms of revelry or even ritual action in folk games. Thomas de Cabham sets his approval on the *jocolatores* who sing the deeds of princes and the lives of the saints "et non faciunt innumeras turpitudines sicut faciunt saltatores et saltatrices."

from the thirteenth century) but employs as a synonym for the forbidden *ludi* the one definite term for drama, interlude.<sup>234</sup> His description suggests farce or at least farcical scenes in religious plays. For the same year the chronicler Knighton gives us an interesting entry<sup>235</sup> in connection with a tourney at Berwick, which can at least, I think, be interpreted as showing that the player of interludes was a typical figure of the time.

It is natural to suppose that the growth of dramatic troupes and their presence at festivals resulted in a modeling of folk games on professional drama. In other words, the games tended to become sophisticated pageants and plays, and the participants tended to become organized troupes of actors, who carried their plays to the lord's manor and the neighboring village. Vestiges of the system have been preserved in the customs of modern mummers and sword dancers at Christmas. That its fullest expansion came before the reign of Elizabeth may be inferred from the evidence of the records and from the nature of the surviving folk games and plays. The zenith was probably reached during the fifteenth century with the development of the morris dance, the king game, and the Robin Hood play in the southern half of England. In spite of the absence of early records there is little reason to doubt that the vogue was

<sup>234</sup> *Registrum Johannis de Trillek*, Canterbury and York Soc., p. 141 (quoted in part by Liebermann in *Archiv*, CXXVII, 197): "in ludis theatralibus qui interdum in ecclesiis fiunt scurilitas et turpiloquium . . . aliaque ad ludibrium pertinencia ex quibus corda fidelium . . . ad inania distrahantur et devocio subtrahatur eorundem ut plurimum intervenire dinoscuntur, in . . . assistencium et spectancium periculosum exemplum . . . huiusmodi ludos sive interludia in ecclesia de L., ejusdem nostre diocesis in qua talia inhonesta frequencius, ut intelleximus, fieri solebant," etc. Cf. p. v for a conjecture that L is for Leominster.

<sup>235</sup> Henry Knighton, *Chronicon*, ed. J. R. Lumby (R. S.), II, 57-58: "Illis diebus ortus est rumor et ingens clamor in populo, eo quod ubi hastiludia prosequerantur quasi in quolibet loco dominarum cohors affuit, quasi comes interludii, in diverso et mirabili apparatu virili, ad numerum quandoque quasi xl. quando l. dominarum de speciosioribus et pulcrioribus non melioribus totius regni, in tunicis partitis scilicet una parte de una secta et altera de alia secta, cum capuciis brevibus et liripiis ad modum chordarum circa caput advolutis, et zonis argento vel auro bene circumstipatis, etiam ex transverso ventris sub umbilico habentes cultellos quos daggerios vulgariter dicunt in powchiis desuper impositis; et sic procedebant in electis dextrariis vel aliis equis bene comptis ad locum hastiludiorum," etc.



approaching its crest in the time of Chaucer. The problem is complicated by the fact that local players of numerous towns were organized for the performance of religious drama, and probably influenced the companies organized for folk drama. Yet the enterprise of the folk is clear in the journeys of May games from village to village or in the visit of a local company to a manorial lord. A famous example is the visit of Captain Cox and his Coventry players to Kenilworth in 1575 to act a Hox Tuesday play before Elizabeth. Even the extraordinarily large number of festivals maintained especially by the church and the disposition of the church to turn every festival to her advantage had not at the opening of the sixteenth century lessened the hold which May game and Whitsun lord, morris and country dance, had on the folk.

The folk game can probably be distinguished best in the old records that illustrate feudal relations. In the same way that the feudal lord had to provide feasts for the folk, we may suspect that he was under a social obligation to open his doors to folk players—as minstrels were commonly made welcome, and the gorgeous mummers of 1377 were received by Richard II.<sup>236</sup> At any rate the great lord was likely to act in the generous fashion of Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or of Elizabeth at Kenilworth. In a payment of two pence to "parochianis nostris tripudicantibus" by Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1342,<sup>237</sup> we have one of the earliest surviving records of such a custom. The money may have been a gift toward the expense of the games or it may have been a payment to the players in the hall. Some of the records already cited indicate that contributions were made toward the general expenses of folk feasts—whether for banquets or games is not clear—and that gifts were bestowed on groups of dancers and mummers who visited the halls of ecclesiastical and secular lords. Payment was made to the plow boys of "Maudelans" at Durham in 1378, for instance, and to Christmas performers at King's Lynn in 1370-1.<sup>238</sup> A number of uncertain cases also have been cited—visits to Durham by *histriones* of Newcastle in 1335-6 and by a number of unnamed companies who were paid small sums in the spring and autumn feasts of St. Cuthbert.<sup>239</sup> Usually the accountants of the fourteenth cen-

<sup>236</sup> Brotanek, *Die englischen Maskenspiele*, p. 6.

<sup>237</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, I, 84.

<sup>238</sup> See pp. 38, 35, and notes 60 and 50 above.

<sup>239</sup> See note 170 above for the records.

tury, as of the ensuing centuries, are too economical of detail to furnish any information as to the nature of the performances, but the accounts of Winchester College in the first quarter of the fifteenth century contain several suggestive entries.<sup>240</sup> The payment to a summer king here in 1412 and that in the time of Henry V to men of Ropley coming with their song and dance before the Winchester Boy Bishop have been cited. The entry in 1400 of a fee to the *lusores* of the town of Winchester who brought their dance to the college has not been mentioned already because the festival occasion is not specified. The visit of the village troupe to the manorial hall was clearly in vogue later. In 1457-8 the *lusores* of Topcliffe, Thirsk, and Ripon were paid sums of from two to four pence at Studly Hall,<sup>241</sup> and in the latter part of the fifteenth century "players" of Stoke, of Thorington Street, of Coggeshall, of Hadleigh, of Esterforde, of Chelmsford, and of Lavenham were feed by the Howards of Stoke-by-Nayland.<sup>242</sup>

The records just cited reveal companies of players belonging to groups of villages in one region. Perhaps these different villages developed the folk games in more or less friendly rivalry. In modern times the most extensive survivals of a particular type of game will often be found in a group of neighboring villages within a restricted area. I have little doubt that the vogue of games in this case represents an exceptional development of the folk game at some earlier period through village competition. The most notable region for the modern morris dance is in Oxfordshire and for the sword dance in northeast Yorkshire.<sup>243</sup> Lincolnshire is especially significant for the plow boy plays.<sup>244</sup> In such regions the various forms of the same game are likely to show more distinctness and individuality in their details than is often found in the variants of some decadent game collected at a distance from each other.

The earliest record known to me suggesting organizations of

<sup>240</sup> Chambers, II, 246.

<sup>241</sup> *Memorials of Fountains Abbey*, Surtees Soc., II, 90; III, 59, 61.

<sup>242</sup> Chambers, II, 255-56. In 1482 Lord Howard gave ten shillings "to the cherche on Whitson Monday at the pley."

<sup>243</sup> Cf. Cecil J. Sharp, *The Morris Book*, I-v, and *The Sword Dances of Northern England*, I-III, *passim*.

<sup>244</sup> Cf. Gutch and Peacock, *County Folk-Lore*, vol. V (*Folk-Lore concerning Lincolnshire*), pp. 176-87; Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 33,418; Chambers, I, 150, 207-10.

players in a number of small villages within a very limited area belongs to the years 1220-28. In an adjustment of claims between the churches of Shipton and Bricklesworth in the diocese of Salisbury, a basis was determined for dividing the proceeds from the *actiones* of five villages in one neighborhood. Ducange gives *actiones* the meaning *spectacula*. Jones and Macray see here a reference to mystery or miracle plays,<sup>245</sup> but *actiones* may be an attempt to translate exactly the term "game," almost universally used in the middle ages for all classes of folk performances. How strong the folk influence may have been in the diversions controlled by the church,<sup>246</sup> it is impossible to say, but in a later period at least it was a common thing for the church to receive the profits of folk performances, as will be seen from the most cursory examination of the churchwardens' accounts published by Hobhouse or by Cox.

Light is thrown on the organization of medieval folk players also through visits of local troupes to neighboring parishes and villages. These inter-parochial and inter-village performances possibly represent the most remarkable development of the medieval folk game. Visits of traveling players are definitely recorded for Reading toward the end of the fourteenth century. Thus the town remunerated the players of Henley in 1382-3, those of Althermanston in

<sup>245</sup> Cf. Jones and Macray, *Charters and Documents of Salisbury*, pp. xi-xii, 104; Chambers, II, 105, 394. The passage reads: "Actiones autem, si quæ competant, in villa de Fifhide et de Idebire cedant canonico de Brikeleswrth. Actiones vero, si quæ competant, in villa de Mideltone et de Langele cedant canonico de Schiptone. Emolumentum vero actionum, si quæ competant, in villa de Linham æqualiter inter se dividant."

<sup>246</sup> In 1312, Greenfield, Archbishop of York, issued a decree against the frequent participation of the clergy with the laity in "spectaculis publicis, ludibriis, et coreiis, immo teatricalibus ludis" (*Memorials of Ripon*, Surtees Soc., II, 68). The terms used here might cover procession or pageant, song and dance drama, and even more formal plays. The last item, like the attack on miracles in *Handlyng Synne*, probably represents a protest against the miracle plays and mystery cycles which must by this time have been in process of rapid development under the trade guilds in the great commercial centers of the north and were possibly in the recognized transition stage of being promoted by the clergy and the laity jointly. Whatever the other terms may mean, the passage may be taken as implying the co-operation of the clergy with the laity in the production of diverse types of entertainment. It was the parish priest of Inverkeithing, it will be remembered, who led the young girls of his parish in "profane" rites during Easter week, 1282 (note 71 *supra*).

1382-3 and 1388-9, and those of Wokingham in 1385-6. At a later period gifts were made at Reading to *lusores* of "Yatale" (1419-20); to players of "Syndelesham" and "Sunnyngges" (1421-2); to players of Wokingham (in 1423-4 and twice in 1427-8); and simply to *lusores* in the church of St. Lawrence (in 1433-4).<sup>247</sup> No clue is given to the nature of the performances, but around 1500 the taste of the region is exemplified in records of the church of St. Lawrence, Reading. Here both religious plays and folk plays were popular.<sup>248</sup> From before 1399 till the middle of the sixteenth century the practice of receiving players from neighboring communities can be traced in the records of a score of towns and villages in the coun-

<sup>247</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, XI, App. VII, pp. 172-74. Cf. p. 171 for a record of a town feast in Reading in 1302, and the following pages for various fifteenth century feasts, for some of which minstrel troupes were paid. The records for the years 1393-1413 are lost.

<sup>248</sup> Cf. Kerry, *St. Lawrence, Reading*, pp. 51-57, 91, 92, 103, 226-28, 233-40, for records which, though incomplete, illustrate adequately the elaborate system of festivals and sports and pastimes around 1500. At Christmas there were holly trees before the rood adorned with lights (1506), figures—in or on a frame—of angels (1524, 1525), and a "queire of the fest of Cristm's" (1517); on Palm Sunday, singing of the Passion (1505, etc.), and "playing the prophet" (1540-1); at Easter, watching of the sepulchre (1498, etc.), "the page\*unt of the Passion" (1508), and "Colen" (1539); at Hocktide, "gatherings" of men and women (1498-9); on May Day (or Philip and Jacob's Day) "gatherings," bachelors' dinner and supper (1505), "Kyngs of Colen," probably in a May-game (1498-9), May-pole (1529), and Robin Hood plays (1501-2, etc.); at Rogations, ringing of bells and perambulation (1506); at Whitsuntide, "gatherings" of youths and maidens (1505, etc.), summer trees (1505, etc.), and king plays (1507-8 [with a "bough"], 1516-7 [with a "tree"], etc.); on Holy Thursday, bell-ringing and procession (1508); on Corpus Christi Day, bell-ringing, procession (1508), and pageants at least (1507, etc.); on the Feast of the Dedication, ringing (1508), and giant and morris dance (1513); on the Sunday before Bartlemas, 1507, a great out-of-doors stage-play in which Adam and Eve appeared. There are also records of performances of the various plays without reference to a particular festival—the Resurrection Play (1507, 1533-5), the "play of Kayme" (1512), "Caymes pageaunt" (1515), a stage-play (1498), the King Play (1502-3, 1516-7, 1540-1), Robin Hood (1503-4, 1505, 1507-8), and the morris dance (1529, 1530, 1541-2). In 1501-2 the Robin Hood Play was presented on "the fayre day"; in 1505 wine was furnished to "Robyn Hod of Handley & his company"; and in 1506 the wardens "payed for a supper to Robyn Hod & his company when he cam from ffynchamsted." (I have followed Kerry's dates without attempting to harmonize the system).

ties along the southeastern coast—Lydd, Rye, New Romney, Hythe, Ruckinge, Folkstone, and many more.<sup>249</sup> To judge from the cases where the records are definite, the plays presented must have been religious to a considerable extent, but an example of the folk game has already been cited in a payment by New Romney to the men of Lydd “when they came with their *May*, and ours, on two occasions” (1422-4).<sup>250</sup> A series of records from Somerset, though later than those from the two regions just discussed, may be more typical of an early period, for Reading and the towns of the coast region represented a population by no means lacking in the wealth and culture of the period, whereas Somerset was more isolated and provincial. Here, in spite of church dominance, the typical festival of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries seems to have been the ale, and a highly developed system of inter-parochial ales existed. The “Christmasse game,” season lords, Robin Hood, and other folk features appear in the records.<sup>251</sup> The impression gotten from the churchwardens’ accounts for this region is that the various units of population were interrelated in a system of festivities which included not only the festival features encouraged by the church, but ales, games, song and dance, and an occasional folk interlude.

In this survey such records as I have been able to find with a bearing on the folk festivals and games of the early middle ages in England have been gathered together and organized. They are insufficient as a basis for final judgment and are often very obscure. Yet they throw additional light, I believe, on the general system of festivals and on the nature and range of the folk games, and they usually enable us to connect customs of the medieval period with customs more fully recorded at a later period. Taken as a whole, they lead to the belief that there was no very marked change in the general type of the games from the early fourteenth century until their rapid decay during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In detail of form and even of content, singing games and mummers’ plays have undoubtedly undergone change from time to time during the centuries of their development, but as we follow the records of

<sup>249</sup> *Hist. MSS. Com.*, v, 491-96; 517-52.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 540.

<sup>251</sup> Hobhouse, *Church-Wardens’ Accounts*, pp. 183, 201, 202, and index under ales, church ales, clerk ales, king, play, Robin Hood, St. George. Cf. *Archaeologia*, xii, 12-13, for a written agreement, “made before the Reformation,” between two Derbyshire villages to support each other’s ales.

folk activity in games and festivals, it is difficult to believe that the fundamental motive was not amply expanded in the pastimes of the medieval folk. Taken as a whole, the records also picture the festival celebration of the folk as more extensive, the devotion to games as more general, in the middle ages than in the sixteenth century and later. Whatever may have been the exact nature of the games, we know that they flourished with a vigor which the church could not control, and justified the early traditional term of "Merry England."

*The University of Chicago.*

---